



CANADA'S CAT LADY  
Atwood's new  
graphic novel

ARMIES OF THE FUTURE  
Making the case for  
real-life Jason Bourne

GOING BROKE IN LEGAL AID  
The high cost of cheap  
justice

# THE WALRUS

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SEPTEMBER 2016

## CANADA'S MEDAL MISSTEP

*An Olympian  
takes down our  
Own the Podium  
strategy*

PLUS  
Douglas Coupland:  
Confessions of an art hoarder  
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from the  
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**RIGHT**  
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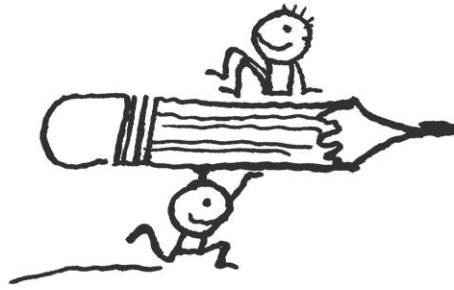
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# Letters

## EXHAUSTED IDEAS

Dale Beugin and Jessie Sitnick's article ("Pricing the Open Road," June) made some very good points about congestion pricing as a way to reduce traffic. However, they should also take a look at New Delhi's strategy: because the traffic is so appalling there, heavy vehicles are prevented from entering the city during daytime hours. The same method should be considered for all North American cities. Simple, but very effective.

*Richard Dean  
Nelson, BC*

Beugin and Sitnick address the symptoms of the problem, not the cause. People drive because they can't live close to where they work, or because available public transit is inadequate. Creating new bridges, tunnels, and freeways to alleviate traffic would be effective for only a short period of time. Instead, we should be focusing on improving public transit and seeking ways to minimize commuting distances.

*Roy Strang  
Surrey, BC*

In 1975, the professor in my highway-design class said, "If you build it, they will fill it." You can build roads to reduce congestion, but as new housing and businesses are established alongside them, the traffic resumes.

The currency for congestion pricing is time, so in order to set tolls, one must ask: How much is time worth? People will pay for a shorter commute, and most won't take transit if driving during rush-hour traffic is faster.

Congestion pricing may change people's habits, but it probably won't ease congestion—it will just end up moving more people. You can't win the war against traffic.

*Robert Thaler  
New Hamburg, ON*

## LOCK YOUR WINDOWS

Jonathan Kay assures us that we can stop worrying about online privacy ("No One Is Watching You," June), because companies have learned that it's bad for business. Still, in situations where invading our privacy is profitable, those companies will do it—most notably in the form of targeted advertising.

Kay's faith in market forces is naive. New technologies produce countless effects, and we need to actively deal with them. Leaving the problem to fix itself is irrational.

*Jack Dodds  
Aurora, ON*

Why does Jonathan Kay conclude that, although companies are benign, we will have much to fear from the surveillance state? He argues that we surrender some privacy willingly to companies in exchange for certain capabilities and services. Are we worse off for surrendering some privacy to the state for some degree of protection from terrorism?

The argument that the Canadian state is too intrusive will not withstand a major terrorist attack. Before that kind of thing happens, we should put more effort into finding ways to collaborate with our democratically elected government.

*Byron Rogers  
Lunenburg, NS*

## THE TALK

Katherine Laidlaw's article ("The Verdict," June) touched a nerve with me, as I'm sure it did with many others. Stories about sexual assault and justice are of value individually, but they also contribute to an important critical mass of discussion.

After the Jian Ghomeshi case surfaced in the news, one friend told me he had not always been sure of how to read some of the women he had slept with. We talked about Ghomeshi and grappled with the difference between the truth and the law. Another friend told me about his experience at a rally for survivors. He was upset and surprised to discover how many women he knew had been raped.

Whatever else has come out of the case—the rhetoric, vitriol, condemnation, and rage—I am thankful for the conversations it has started amongst my friends. It helped me understand how I felt, and I hope it helped them, too. More than anything, I hope these discussions are happening everywhere and can help us find a better way to do right by each other, as well as ourselves.

*Sarah Ladik  
Inuvik, NT*

"The time has come," *The Walrus* said, "to talk of many things." Send us a letter, email ([letters@thewalrus.ca](mailto:letters@thewalrus.ca)), or tweet, or post on our website or Facebook page. Comments may be published in any medium and edited for length, clarity, and accuracy.

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## EDUCATION

# Campus Confidential

*Where's the line between accommodating disabled students and coddling them?*

BY LIZ BEATTY

ILLUSTRATION BY KYLE METCALF



**C**OLLEGES and universities from St. John's to Nanaimo will be welcoming record numbers of students with disabilities this fall. In some cases, these new students will be navigating campuses in wheelchairs or with service dogs. But many disabilities carry no outward signs. These "invisible disabilities" may include depression, anxiety, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

To level the academic playing field, schools offer what are called accommodations—which may involve supplying hearing-impaired students with listening devices, for example, or providing anxiety-afflicted students with extra time on assignments. Our society's understanding of such disabilities is far more advanced today than it was just a few years ago. But the rise in students presenting

with invisible disabilities has also created a backlash in some quarters.

On June 20, University of Calgary business law professor Peter Bowal authored a *National Post* commentary about a student who'd received academic accommodations. "He rarely attended class that week," Bowal writes. "And why should he? Using paid note-takers was but one of eleven accommodations made for him, most of which I was required to put in place.... He goaded me about all his rights and harassed and threatened his way through the [course]."

Bowal later asked a university administrator to channel students with similar disabilities away from his one-week intensive course and into the less demanding thirteen-week version. But, according to Bowal, the official "dismissed" his concern, saying, "The human-rights people would be all over that," and explaining that "teachers

are supposed to give [students] what they want and keep them happy.... Rigour and discipline belong to another era."

Other academics share Bowal's sense of powerlessness. University of Ottawa English professor Janice Fiamengo was called before an Ontario adjudicative tribunal after a student claimed she had failed to comply with protocols that allowed for customized exams. "There is definitely a shared frustration amongst some of my colleagues," says Fiamengo. "Whoever comes with whatever request, no matter how outrageous, it seems to be granted."

I recently gained first-hand knowledge of this issue when a law professor at a Toronto-area university denied my own son a four-day extension on a course assignment—an accommodation the university had approved because of his learning disability. It took four weeks and many calls from two levels of university staff before the professor relented. We later received a written apology from the provost.

I don't agree with how the professor dealt with my son. But I do understand his general sense of frustration. Most schools are still finding their footing in this area. In the meantime, faculty pushback should be expected—and even, in some cases, welcomed—especially as disability accommodations move into uncharted territory.

**O**N MOST Canadian campuses, students applying for mental-health and learning-disability accommodations typically are required to submit to a full psycho-educational assessment—a process involving interviews with a psychologist. On this basis, university disability specialists decide which requests are reasonable, then customize an accommodations plan. Professors are informed of what's required, but the diagnoses remain confidential.

This system may now be thrown into question thanks to fallout from an application filed with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario by Navi Dhanota—a PhD candidate in the critical disability studies program at Toronto's York University. Dhanota had refused to provide school officials with details of her mental-health disability—or even to identify what that disability was—and so gave the school no opportunity to perform any kind of assessment.

The tribunal ruled in her favour, setting a controversial new precedent for other



universities. Dhanota had set out to remove barriers and reduce stigma so that vulnerable students with mental-health issues could more easily get help—important goals. However, the ramifications of her tribunal win have left some, including me, asking whether our good intentions have gone too far.

Under the standard upheld by the tribunal in her case, a student need only present a document from any licensed doctor, even a GP, confirming that some sort of mental-health diagnosis exists; a description of the general issues involved; and a set of accommodations that university disability staff would be required to implement.

According to Allyson Harrison of Queen's University—an expert in the area of disability accommodations—physicians don't receive any standardized training on how impairments play out in higher education. She says that several physicians have told her they just ask students what they want and then write it down. "That's not fair," she tells me. "That's not equitable, and it's not informed research."

As the mother of a son who was diagnosed with an invisible disability as a preschooler, I've run the gauntlet of psychologist visits, parent/teacher meetings, and playground bullies. I understand Dhanota's struggles and applaud her goals. But I also see problems with this amorphous new standard for disabilities.

First off: Why would professors have confidence in mental-health accommodations (justified or not) if the underlying diagnosis has not been considered by their

own on-campus disability professionals? If there's a credibility issue now, imagine what's to come.

What will stop competitive students (or their parents) from asking family doctors to approve dubious accommodations? (Johnny never learned sound study habits. So, naturally, he has "anxiety" about school and now requires double the time for all exams.) The potential for abuse is vast.

Without oversight from qualified professionals, suggested accommodations take on the quality of a wish list: reduced course load, preferential seating, a buddy notetaker, a scribe for exams, specialized computer equipment, distraction-reduced environments. Do we really want to raise a generation of young adults who feel entitled to such accommodations?

Harrison told me about a visit she recently received from a Queen's student and her mother. Both had a congenital malformation whereby some fingers had fused together—the mother's condition being even worse than her daughter's. When Harrison marvelled at all that the young woman could do, she replied, "I grew up with a mother [who] said, 'If I can do it with three fingers, you can do it with five.'" Harrison agrees that it's empowering when students are supported through accommodations—but that they should be pushed to do as much as possible for themselves.

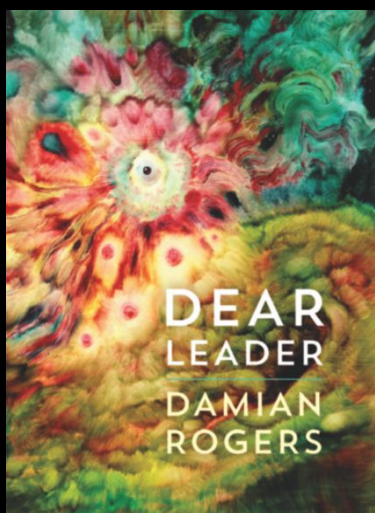
The approach taken at Carleton University's disabilities-services office—the Paul Menton Centre (PMC)—has made it a leader in its field. The Ottawa-based university maintains clear thresholds for accommoda-

tions. PMC workers build trust with faculty by inviting feedback and avoiding unilateral dictates. Like Dhanota, PMC director Larry McCloskey believes that a growing number of vulnerable students—even those without formal diagnoses—need access to help. But he says there's a better way to provide that than by opening the accommodation floodgates.

For five years, Carleton has been working hands-on with any student who feels academically or psychologically overwhelmed—including those without an approved accommodations regime. Through the school's From Intention to Action (FITA) program, students commit to twelve weeks of meetings with mental-health interns and staff coordinators. Similar projects are underway at the University of Toronto and Humber College. Dr. David Goldbloom, former chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, has said that a system like FITA should be on every campus across Canada.

As Steve Silberman, award-winning author of *NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity*, told me, "By embracing atypically developing students, we're actually inviting a truer reflection of the best of our society—not necessarily the people who've had the easiest lives, but the people who are able to see the world from different angles."

The challenge for school administrators is to help every qualified student get an equal chance to participate—while remaining true to the academic tradition at the heart of their mandate. ✍



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## JUSTICE

# Going Broke in Legal Aid

*The high cost of cheap justice*

BY BREESE DAVIES

ILLUSTRATION BY SAM ISLAND



**L**IKE MOST criminal lawyers in Ontario, I have many clients who rely on legal aid to pay my fees and fund their defence. I take on these clients despite the fact that the hourly rate is abysmal and that I will likely be paid for only a fraction of the work I do.

Make no mistake: I did not become a criminal defence lawyer so I could earn a huge salary and live a lavish lifestyle. I knew I could make more money if I chose virtually any other area of practice. As was also the case for many of my colleagues, I relished the prospect of fighting for individual rights and defending against police misconduct and abuses of state power. What I did not realize was that I would also end up spending hours and hours battling a bloated and outdated legal-aid bureaucracy. Established in 1967, the Ontario Legal Aid Plan—now Legal Aid Ontario (LAO)—is one of the largest providers of legal services in Canada. It issues roughly 55,000 certificates each year to people charged with criminal offences, and accounts for more than a third of the roughly \$790 million that Canada spends annually on legal aid. There are many reasons to be proud of this program, which aims to provide low-income citizens with access to legal representation. But it also seems

determined to exploit the very lawyers it depends on.

A few years ago, I agreed to represent a young man charged with drug and firearms offences. A thorough review of the file made it clear to me that the police had violated his Charter rights in the course of their investigation. In the end, the trial judge agreed. I was paid just over \$7,000. That may sound like fair pay—until you break down the numbers.

I spent six full days in court arguing his case. I made six other court appearances for administrative purposes, waiting in a crowded courtroom with dozens of other lawyers simply in order to confirm a date that had been set for the preliminary inquiry and trial. I spent more than eighty hours preparing the required written argument and my cross-examinations of the police officers involved in the investigation. My articling student spent close to 100 hours doing legal research. Unfortunately, legal-aid funding allows for a maximum of two hours to prepare a Charter application. So I was not paid for any of my student's time or for most of my own time.

One small mercy—the case was in Toronto. I did not have to travel to court. As you might have guessed, LAO does not pay lawyers for the hours they spend on the road.

I try to avoid calculating precisely how little I actually make per hour on legal-aid files. It is simply too depressing. In this case, I made just over \$62 per hour (and my student, as noted, made nothing). That is not enough to cover the fixed costs associated with running a practice—rent, utilities, phones, a salaried assistant, bookkeeper services. Thankfully, I don't have the crushing six-figure student loan that most recent law-school grads are carrying.

To add insult to injury, I had to beg LAO for the \$7,000 I was paid. If I had been paid the maximum allowed under the regulations, I would have received only \$4,500 (or \$52 per hour). You see, for most cases, LAO arbitrarily establishes a cap on the number of hours it will pay for—one that is wildly out of step with the reality of criminal practice. Defence lawyers often exhaust the allocated prep hours well before a trial ends—as happened in my case—and sometimes even before it begins. Out of a personal commitment to clients and a professional obligation to the court, we typically conduct the remainder of the case pro bono.

The problem isn't endemic to Ontario. Criminal-defence lawyers are underfunded nationwide and around the world. Two years ago, lawyers in British Columbia—who are paid 30 percent less than




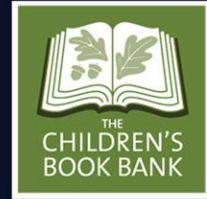
I am—withheld services for eighteen months to press the government for a raise. In Australia, funding cuts have left legal aid in crisis: at least 45,000 people have been forced to represent themselves in court since 2009.

If legal-aid pay scales had kept pace with the times, the scales of justice might have remained balanced and the promise of equal access to justice been met. Instead, the legal-aid “tariff” remains geared to the conditions of a bygone era, when trials were far less complicated and the investigative mechanisms that now dominate so many criminal cases—video surveillance, wiretaps, electronic communications—were rare. Today, police investigations often generate mountains of evidence. So under the existing system, legal-aid lawyers are faced with two equally unappealing options—cut corners on trial preparation to satisfy the arbitrary tariff guidelines or assume the risk of doing hours of unpaid work. For many lawyers, neither option is tenable. As a result, many experienced lawyers simply refuse to take on clients through legal aid, leaving inexperienced colleagues to do the bulk of these cases.

One relatively recent addition to the legal-aid repertoire in Ontario further incentivizes lawyers to cut corners—a block

fee for certain specific case outcomes. Under this model, lawyers are paid a predetermined amount to resolve a case by way of a guilty plea, for example, whether they spend twenty minutes or twenty hours on the file. My fear is that this will spur legal-aid lawyers to encourage clients to plead guilty even if their case could be won at trial. Identifying a viable defence in a criminal case takes a lot of skill and a lot of time. It might even require that counsel conduct their own investigation, interview witnesses, and track down exculpatory evidence. Well-heeled clients expect that their lawyers will do this work before giving them advice on whether to plead guilty or go to trial. But an overworked, underpaid legal-aid lawyer has little reason to make this kind of effort if their client is willing to plead guilty.

Legal-aid programs are grounded in the ideal that there should not be one law for the rich and another for the poor. But such programs have been largely neglected and left to decay. Unfortunately, the public—although highly attuned to the debate over two-tier health care—seems largely oblivious to the fact that two-tier criminal justice is a stark reality in Canada and that the current legal-aid system hurts the impoverished and marginalized groups it was designed to protect. 



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## SOCIETY

# Forever Soldiers

*Coming home from the battlefield is hard—  
maybe some veterans shouldn't*

BY MATT GURNEY

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUCHIE REID



**I**N A *STAR TREK: The Next Generation* episode called “The Hunted,” Captain Jean-Luc Picard makes a port visit to Angosia III, an advanced and peaceful society seeking membership in the United Federation of Planets. The Angosians have recovered from a devastating war waged by an aggressive enemy. But the crew discovers that the victory came with an ethical trade-off: with their survival at stake, and no established military traditions, the Angosians used biochemical manipulation and radical psychiatric techniques to create an elite warrior class.

Once peace was restored, these Angosian warriors transformed from heroes to outcasts. The very qualities that had made them ruthless killers became liabilities when they returned to civilian life. And so these veterans were banished to a nearby moon, which effectively became their prison. At one point, an enhanced Angosian combat vet tells a Starfleet officer, “My improved reflexes have allowed me to kill eighty-four times. And my improved memory allows me to remember each one of those eighty-four faces. Can you imagine what that feels like?” Almost thirty years later, with the real experience

of 9/11, the war in Afghanistan, and the invasion of Iraq behind us, that sounds a lot like PTSD.

The most prescient science-fiction stories reflect something vital about the world we inhabit. The Earth is a far more violent place today than the fictional world of Angosia III ever was. But that doesn’t mean we don’t confront the same problems. The *New York Times* recently published a report on the soldiers who find it most difficult to reintegrate into civilian life. “I don’t even leave my house much,” says former US Marine Jeff Ewert. “I’m scared not because I’m an über-killer or anything. I just minimize my exposure because I know how easy it is to cross that line, to act without thinking.”

Some of the soldiers who spoke to the *Times* have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan on as many as five tours of duty and by necessity have adapted themselves to the brutal realities of counter-insurgency warfare. In the field, the qualities of hyper-alertness, rapid decision-making, and thriving on stress are what keep them alive. In workaday civilian life, such qualities can drive a veteran mad.

Many of the triggering situations these soldiers encounter are surprisingly humdrum—disproportionate responses to such everyday offences as littering or being cut off in traffic. Typically, such breaches of the social contract are mere annoyances, not life-and-death concerns—unless you are coming from a place where soldiers and civilians share common space, and danger could be lurking at every turn. Think of a real-life Jason Bourne who has memorized the location of all the exits and casually evaluated the potential threat posed by fellow patrons—all by the time he sits down at a booth in a diner.

“During my time in Sarajevo, my mind had clicked into survival mode,” wrote PTSD sufferer Fred Doucette in his 2015 memoir, *Better Off Dead*. “The simple reaction of fight, flight, or freeze is what I [heeded]. Caring, loving, feeling, and happiness had gone. Life had turned to black and white. I was physically back in Canada, but my mind was still on the streets of Sarajevo.”

It should be noted that the majority of combat veterans who return from war are able to reintegrate into society. But some types of soldiers have lower success rates than others. Researchers who



recently studied nearly 500 suicides among US Army personnel, for instance, found that soldiers in two specialties operating at the heart of counter-insurgency warfare—infantry and combat engineering—were significantly more likely to commit suicide than those in other specialties. These soldiers were unusual in another way, too: across the Army as a whole, a soldier is more likely to kill himself when deployed abroad—separated from loved ones, in a potentially hostile environment—or upon return from deployment than when stateside. Among infantry and combat engineers, this pattern is reversed.

Given the full-scale meltdown of large parts of the Middle East and Central Asia, today's career soldiers are more likely than their predecessors were to be exposed to a slew of long, inconclusive, low-intensity conflicts. Going forward, the forces that fight these battles will be smaller and more specialized than the sprawling armies that won the large wars of the twentieth century. We will train these select professionals harder, equip them better, and deploy them on longer, repeated tours of duty. But despite all of this investment, we still have relatively little idea of how to reorient them when they finally come home.

In some cases, this transition may not even be possible. As a combat-stress expert told the *Times*, “Turning off this hyper-hardwiring after returning from a deployment is not an automatic function of the brain. We have virtually no science to guide us in managing these instincts.”

Part of the problem is that the nature of war has changed more quickly than we have. As military historian Victor Davis Hanson notes, the central act of Western warfare since the time of Ancient Greece had been the epic, one-off battle between masses of opposing infantry: because such conflicts were decisively resolved, surviving citizen soldiers could return home in time for harvest. Modern wars against terrorists and paramilitary groups, by contrast, can drag on for decades and require a professionalized breed of high-tech soldier, who in turn suffers a more diverse array of psychic wounds.

Changing attitudes toward warfare may also contribute to a transformation in the way we see the fighting class more broadly. During World War II, it wasn't unusual for a farmer or mechanic to go marching off with a gun and then return to

his tractor or factory a few years later—the industrial-age equivalent of the Greek hoplite coming back to his fields. Even if the concept of “shell shock” was to some extent familiar, most war movies from that era show Allied soldiers as farm boys who glide easily back into a life of soda shops and drive-in movies. But statistically speaking, soldiers now constitute a much smaller part of the population than they did during the First or Second World Wars. They have become, in our imagination, members of a distant, fabled warrior class—near-superhumans, different from the rest of us in all but a genetic sense.

If the therapies provided by society cannot help these warriors transition to civilian life, the only solution may be, in effect, to transform the bugs of the current system into features: the armies of the future may eventually be staffed by ultra-elite soldiers who enlist without any expectation of ever reintegrating into normal civilian life. It's doubtful that the sort of Angosian scheme put forth in *Star Trek: TNG* would ever be adopted as explicit policy, of course. (And the increasing use of robotics in war may make some of these problems go away on their own. If that were to happen, some of the best ways to imagine a future reality might come from the world of fiction: Daniel H. Wilson's bestselling 2011 novel, *Robopocalypse*, for example, describes a US Army that sends armed, autonomous robots into Afghan towns and villages on patrols.) But this “warrior class” model has appeared before in history. The Ottoman Empire, for instance, would train kidnapped Christian boys to become elite infantry units known as janissaries, which constituted their own distinctive class within Ottoman society.

Needless to say, no one is proposing such extreme measures of recruitment—or suggesting that these elite specimens be exiled to other realms when their military service to Western nations is at an end. But we may wish to consider longer terms of enlistment—and greater financial incentives for those who remain in the military for their entire working career.

At the very least, our recruiters should be upfront with those who enlist in the most demanding and brutal of front-line military specialties: the most horrible job on earth may become the only one they will ever be able to truly enjoy. ☸



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## CULTURE

# The Ghomeshi Effect

*Finally we're talking about sexual assault.  
When does the pain stop?*

BY JESSICA JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATION BY KATIE TURNER



**T**HE ONLY COMFORT anyone could take from last year's trial of Jian Ghomeshi was that it seemed to signal a turning point in the way we think about sexual assault. Editorials in major media outlets demanded an overhaul of the ways we prevent, investigate, and punish the crime. Intersecting conversations on social media—among women, men, former victims, and their loved ones—reflected a sense of anger and frustration. Even the most mainstream voices spoke up. “Tell us your story,” urged

a form on Global TV's website. “[T]he more people talk about it, the better able we are to combat sexual violence.”

In the months since, we have seen signs of incremental but significant progress. On June 28, the government of Ontario launched a pilot project that provides four hours of free legal advice to residents of Toronto, Ottawa, and Thunder Bay who come forward as victims of sexual assault. The legal advice could help a victim report a crime, create a statement, or find a lawyer for trial. This is the type of service that

could, for example, have aided the five women who testified against St. John's serial rapist Sofyan Boalag: one of the complainants involved said that she hadn't notified police immediately after her assault because she had assumed they wouldn't believe her.

Responding to public protest over the handling of sexual assault allegations at post-secondary institutions across Canada, the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia have moved to require that schools implement official sexual assault policies. And many Canadians will be affected, directly or indirectly, by institutional responses to allegations of sexual misconduct at the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, WestJet, the *Toronto Star*, and other high-profile organizations. Thanks to the media's increasing willingness to cover the subject, a surge of victims coming forward to talk about their experiences, and the more stringent enforcement of workplace policies, a crime that was once approached as a typically female, individual trauma is now a topic of public concern. “In this [post-Ghomeshi] era, I think there is a bigger discussion of sexual assault than has ever happened in my lifetime,” says Pamela Cross, legal director of Luke's Place Support and Resource Centre for Women and Children.

Increased transparency, more resources for victims, and candid discussions of something once stigmatized as private and shameful: these are developments I hoped for when I wrote about this subject last winter for *The Walrus*. And yet, the last few months have brought neither resolution nor relief.

It's one thing to appreciate, on an intellectual level, that incidents of sexual violence are massively under-reported—to know in the abstract that such crimes are at this moment taking place behind closed doors. It's another thing to read detailed descriptions of the stories of real people such as Jennifer Leigh O'Neill, who recently provided a research panel of Ontario MPPs with disturbing details of her experience: after being drugged and imprisoned in an apartment, she then faced the ordeal of having to navigate Ontario's emergency-response and court systems. Hers is the sort of story we all need to hear—but it also leaves us with a sense of despair and vulnerability.



In retrospect, the Ghomeshi trial was a rare example, being an unusually lurid case. Its specifics may have contributed to a black-and-white view of sexual assault, one that involves a larger-than-life protagonist preying on a series of hapless victims. The stories that surround us today involve a broad range of predatory behaviours and allegations of varying degrees of severity. As these stories come to light, it is not always clear what really happened. Last fall, one of my former classmates at the University of British Columbia, Steven Galloway, was suspended from his position as head of the creative writing department. Although the specifics of the allegations were never made public, a university press release implied he'd behaved improperly. This summer, the school concluded that only one of the allegations against him—one positioned as relatively minor—had been substantiated. He was later fired.

Many sexual assault stories still founder on the notion of “he said, she said”: long a barrier to justice for victims, it obscures the recollections of accusers with a cloud of reasonable doubt. In its current sense, the phrase dates back to the Clarence Thomas hearings of 1991, when the US Supreme Court appointee faced accusations of harassment from Anita Hill. But today's court transcripts, investigative reports, and private email correspondence among the parties involved often suggest something more akin to “she said, he *heard*.” For instance, what stands out in the recent report on the dismissal of Sujit Choudhry—the dean of law at UC Berkeley and the recipient of a 2010 Trudeau Foundation Fellowship—is the claim by the complainant, his former executive assistant, that he made uncomfortable physical contact with her throughout the workday. Choudhry did not dispute that he had done this. But he claimed that he had hugged and kissed the complainant only once or twice per week—and that she had not voiced any objections to his behaviour. “There was never any sexual intent,” he said, sounding perplexed. What constituted light, innocent touching for him was the cause of an extended stress leave for her.

In *Sex Object*, her new memoir, *Guardian* columnist Jessica Valenti illustrates that the tacit dehumanization of women—enabled by a culture that normalizes catcalling and social-media trolling—may also explain why many offenders do not even recognize

their own cruelty. The best response we are seeing to such instances of objectification is the teaching of empathy. After male students at Dalhousie University's dental school were revealed to have been posting misogynist comments about their female classmates on a private Facebook group, administrators initiated a mediation process that brought together both the men and the women they'd denigrated. The participants met regularly over a five-month period, ending in 2015. A subsequently published report indicates that the men did not fully understand why their behaviour was wrong until they were forced to listen to their victims directly. In a moving concluding statement thanking the administration for having put them through the process, they wrote, “We have asked ourselves questions with no easy answers, such as: ‘How did I not notice?’ ‘Why did I make those assumptions?’ ‘How did I let this happen?’”

Alberta judge Robin Camp—who is facing six allegations arising from a 2014 domestic-violence trial over which he presided, and during which he apparently belittled a sexual assault victim—recently underwent sensitivity training. According to his lawyer, this experience left Camp “better equipped to judge cases with the empathy, wisdom and sensitivity to social context to which all judges aspire.” I believe it was a similar sense of awareness that led a former partner of mine to write, after he had seen my last piece on this subject, “I wish that I had heard you better, listened better.”

Until this year, I never thought of myself as living in a particularly revolutionary time. I graduated from university and started working in the 2000s. Notwithstanding riot grrrls and anti-globalization protests, I didn't think I had seen anything like the social disruption witnessed by my parents in the sixties and seventies. But as our society takes its first steps toward addressing the root causes of sexual assault—through the courts, the media, and the education system—I realize that we may be witnessing a new kind of revolutionary movement.

In the end, we will undoubtedly all be the better for it. But, as with all revolutions, the transformation won't come without pain. I still approach each new testimonial with a sense of dread, not hope—and find myself asking how many more we'll have to endure. ☹

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## BUSINESS

# The Boys from the Chocolate Factory

*With the biggest grow op in the world, an Ontario company is set to turn Canada into a marijuana superpower*

BY BRETT POPPLEWELL  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LAM

IT WAS RUSH HOUR on a mid-May morning, and Bruce Linton, CEO of the world's largest producer of legally grown, sold, smoked, vaped, and consumed marijuana, sat in the driver's seat of a rented Dodge Charger, heading south, against Toronto traffic, on his way to wine country. He kept the speedometer at a respectable, but law-bending, 120 kilometres per hour, except when trucks or cars got in his way. Then the forty-nine-year-old pressed on the throttle.

It wasn't yet 8 a.m., but Linton had been up for four hours, having woken around 4 a.m. next to his wife in a quiet and leafy part of the capital once known as the home of the Ottawa Senators and the rest of the city's nouveau riche. He'd begun his day by pacing around his house in the dark and looking out at his swimming pool while he fired off a dozen emails. Then he'd driven to the airport and caught a plane to Toronto. I'd jumped in the car with him shortly after 7 a.m. and had been throwing questions at him ever since.

Linton's eyes darted between the open road and the passenger seat, where I scribbled his words into a notebook. He waited for my pen to catch up. "If you really want to get all of this, we need to do a book," he said. Then he recounted how he and a small team of tech and policy geeks with Bay Street cred had turned an abandoned Hershey's factory into the most recognized grow op on the planet, and how they were now inking deals with industrialists in Germany, horticulturalists in Australia, sexual-aid manufacturers in Colorado, and celebrities in California. It's all part of a fast-moving game that, if won, could leave Linton and his executives at the helm of a billion-dollar company when recreational pot becomes legal in Canada.

The needle crept toward 130 kilometres per hour as Linton described a future in which Canada would supplant Israel as the global leader in the scientific research of cannabinoids while replacing the Netherlands as the cultural homeland of marijuana innovation and export. It's a grand dream, to





be sure, but one he insists is quickly becoming a reality. Headquartered in Smiths Falls, Ontario, his three-year-old company—Canopy Growth Corp.—is emerging as a national cannabis conglomerate. At the time we spoke, Linton was in advanced negotiations to get the high-cannabidiol strains he was growing in Scarborough sold in pill and oil form at pharmacies across the country. But it was his vision for the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) drawn from the weed in his Niagara-on-the-Lake greenhouse that seemed truly inspired.

It's a two-stage plan. First, he'll let customers get used to seeing a range of his combustible marijuana strains for sale in the same stores that carry traditional liquors. Then he'll release a line of drinkable cannabis products. Linton sees a world in which THC will become one of the main ingredients inside corked bottles of what future generations will consider premium booze. THC-laced soda pop is already available on the black market, and people have been infusing liquor with cannabis at their homes for years. Linton is going to take it mainstream, challenging the spirits establishment by producing an entirely new beverage that offers a different sort of buzz. Most people still think of pot as something to smoke and vape, or as something that can be added to food. Linton wants to show it can be so much more.

Shortly before 9 a.m., we started to see signs for the United States border. "We're running early," Linton said. "Let's get breakfast." He pulled off the highway and made for a McDonald's drive-thru. He ordered an extra-large coffee and two breakfast burritos for himself and an Egg McMuffin meal for me.

We sat in the parking lot and ate off our laps. Between bites of salsa-doused burrito, Linton explained how rare it is to witness the birth of an industry, especially one based on a known commodity with a pre-established market. The drug already has a multi-generational user base estimated at seven million people in Canada alone. Linton is determined not just to reach as many of those people as possible, but also to access the worldwide market. "Three years ago, I knew nothing about growing pot," he confessed. "Now I'm the CEO of the biggest grow op willing to publish its address."

At times, Linton sounded less like a traditional drug-policy reformer and more like a corporate monopolist. There are those



who criticize him for this, but he doesn't seem to care.

The cultural and political landscape surrounding marijuana is changing fast, and Linton, more than anyone else, seems primed to profit from it. The Trudeau government has promised to do what only Uruguay had done before: declare a national end to the prohibition on the recreational growth, sale, and consumption of marijuana. Linton's company—and his country—is set to spearhead a global movement.

"Cannabis is going to be the great disruptor of our time," he said. "Once the recreational markets start opening up, this whole industry is going to explode. We've got a three-to-four-year lead over the rest of the world, but we gotta make sure we don't lose it." He scrunched up his burrito wrappers and tossed them into the paper takeout bag by my feet; then he peeled the free-coffee stickers from both our cups and stuck them to the back of his BlackBerry.

"I love any company with a loyalty program," he said. Then he fired up the Charger and asked, "Are you ready to see the Farm?"

IT'S SOMEWHAT IRONIC that Canada is now emerging as a pioneer in the legalization of cannabis. The country was one of the first to criminalize pot, declaring it illegal fourteen years before the United States introduced its Marihuana Tax Act of 1937 to effectively ban the drug's usage. Thirty-five percent of Canadians still support pot's criminalization.

Humans have consumed cannabis for at least 5,000 years. The weed is said to have originated in Central Asia, where the Chinese used it for medicinal purposes. It appeared in the writings of Herodotus, who described Eurasian nomads burning "hemp-seed" in their steam baths to joyous effect. And it sailed with the Spaniards to the Americas shortly after Columbus. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams are all known to have at the very least grown it.

Canada developed its first drug policy in 1908. The first prohibited substance was opium, which was, at that time, smoked recreationally in dark dens and available in pill and liquid forms in pharmacies across the country. Citizens first learned of the "new menace" to society—"marahuana"—in 1920 thanks to Emily Murphy, a renowned suffragette and Canada's first female magistrate. Her writings in *Maclean's* magazine



1



3





2

**PREVIOUS PAGE** Bruce Linton — “Mr. Wonka” — in his chocolate-factory office.

- 1 The old Hershey’s factory, flying new colours.
- 2 Mark Zekulin outside the “mother room” in Smiths Falls.
- 3 Relics from the facility’s former life as a chocolate factory.
- 4 The factory mezzanine features the same decor as the company’s shops.



4



5

helped bring about a national drug panic that was largely fuelled by racism against the Asian community in British Columbia. Three years later, marijuana was added to Canada’s list of illegal drugs.

There doesn’t seem to be any proof that anyone was actually smoking the stuff on Canadian soil until nine years later, when police first confiscated a cache of marijuana cigarettes. By then, the prohibition on alcohol in Canada had fallen away, and the rum-runners who’d been profiting from the illegal sale of domestic liquor were among the country’s richest entrepreneurs, having made a fortune smuggling contraband into the US (which remained “legally dry” until 1933).

Linton and others hope that history will repeat itself. It was during those years when liquor was legal in Canada but illegal in the US that the Seagram Company of Montreal became the world’s largest distiller. Indeed, the idea of becoming the Seagram of weed is what inspires Linton. At its peak, Seagram was a major player in everything from liquor and movies to theme parks and crude oil. As Linton sees it, his company has the potential to be all of those things, and more.

Founded in early 2013, Canopy (originally known as MABH Ontario Inc.) was the brainchild of Linton and a man named Chuck Rifici, a long-time CFO of the Liberal Party of Canada (who is now suing Canopy for wrongful dismissal). It’s not clear which man deserves most of the credit, but their idea seems to have taken shape when one, or both, began reading about a prospective shake-up in the country’s medicinal marijuana laws. Then, in June 2013, in a bid to “streamline” the existing program, Health Canada announced that it was preparing to privatize the market, granting a small batch of licences to Canadians looking to start their own grow ops.

By December 2013, MABH Ontario Inc.—renamed Tweed Marijuana Inc.—had five employees and was at the top of the list of producers waiting on a licence to sell. A month later, it received approval. Three months after that, Tweed became the first marijuana producer to be publicly traded on the TSX Venture Exchange. Overnight, its market value blew up to \$89 million—although it had not yet sold a single gram. Seventeen months later, it had 6,000 customers, had gobbled up a major competitor—the medical-marijuana

firm Bedrocan, which operates out of a Scarborough warehouse—and adopted its current name: Canopy Growth.

**“THE FARM,”** as Linton calls it, is a 350,000-square-foot greenhouse located in Niagara-on-the-Lake, just a ten-minute drive from the US border. When Linton and his company purchased it in June 2014, it was an empty glass building with a soil floor that had once grown eggplants. Now it was the largest known marijuana facility in the world. It operated at up to 20 percent capacity through 2015, but was now undergoing a massive retrofit in preparation for a full summer harvest. Linton had ordered that the entire greenhouse be growing weed by the summer of 2016 as an “efficiency drill” to ensure that the 100 employees who worked at the Farm could actually handle the output. His directive followed comments made by Canada’s health minister Jane Philpott on April 20, when she stood before the UN General Assembly in New York and promised Canadian marijuana legislation by the spring of 2017.

With a timeline for the legalization of the recreational market seemingly in place, Linton believed it was crucial that Canopy Growth max out its current capacity and produce 15,500 kilograms of bud annually. But the company would have to get even more space to grow if it wanted to maintain its dominant 27 percent share of Canada’s current \$100 million medicinal market, as well as grab a similar share of the estimated \$10 billion legal recreational market.

Linton parked the Charger outside what looked like a steel barn—an open-concept office built on the side of the greenhouse. “I’m going to give you the investor’s tour,” he said. Then he put on a lab coat, handed me two hair nets—one for my head and another for my beard—pressed his thumb on a biometric scanner, and unlocked the door to the greenhouse, which was two-and-a-half times the size of the baseball field inside Toronto’s Rogers Centre. “If you look closely from one end to the other,” he joked, as I gazed out on the botanists and biotechnicians in the distance, “you can see the curvature of the earth.”

For all its size, the greenhouse was empty of plants. Linton opened his arms wide and said, “By Canada Day, this place will be filled with pot.” Then he walked out onto a white plastic sheet, stood between irrigation pipes and a smattering

of high-powered fans, and said, “If we came back here in a few months and stood exactly where we are, you wouldn’t even be able to see me.” Then he revealed an entirely new aspect of his vision: “We’re going to grow experimental marijuana trees,” he said, explaining that the plan had been suggested by a Penn State tissue culture propagation specialist the company had hired. “Thick trunks, in 170-litre pots. They’re going to be like oak trees. No one, as far as we’re aware, has ever tried to see how big you can grow these things.”

Just after 11 a.m., Linton looked at his BlackBerry. “We need to get back on the road,” he said. He had a meeting in Toronto with a major pharmaceutical company and didn’t want to be late.

**I**MET LINTON AGAIN a few days later in the mezzanine of his converted chocolate factory in Smiths Falls, Ontario, a small town about an hour’s drive from Ottawa. Unlike at the Farm, where the marijuana plants basked in the sunlight, everything grown inside the second facility did so under a fluorescent glow. The factory had served as the company’s headquarters since August 2013, when Rifici and Linton beat the cobwebs out of the doorways, scared the rats out of the machinery, and saved the building from demolition. Abandoned relics from its original owner, the Hershey Company, were proudly displayed on the walls. Vintage ads for Klondike Cough Nuggets and Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups hung next to shelves with high-end vaporizers and empty medicinal weed jars.

It was just after noon, and Linton was already behind on the to-do list he’d written on a Post-it. The first item involved printing out a homework assignment for one of his sons. Now he was preparing for item number four, “Fraud audit with Deloitte,” and the equally intriguing number five, “Meet Colorado sex guys.”

Linton invited me into his office, which had a “Mr. Wonka” nameplate on the door. He twisted the top off a bottle of Canadian Tire-brand water, took a swig, and began dialing a number on his phone. Soon, he was on the line with the owners of a Colorado-based sex-spray company that claimed to have harnessed the “therapeutic aphrodisiac” within cannabis and was now making a niche for itself by producing “the first marijuana-infused personal lubricant for her pleasure.” It took an hour before

Linton was done negotiating the beginnings of a licencing agreement to sell the Colorado company’s line of products—which included suppositories it claimed could both relieve menstrual pain and boost sexual pleasure. No one on the call knew what the deal should be worth. Still, sex and weed seemed to go together, at least in the minds of the suppository guys, and Linton wanted a cut in case they were right. When the call ended, he got up from his chair with a bolt of nervous energy and said, “This is the most exciting part about all of this.”

“The sex spray?” I asked.

“People are just starting to figure out all that can be done with this stuff. We’re not just growing pot. We’re growing cannabinoids.”

It has been 211 years since scientists first extracted morphine from opium and began using it for medicinal purposes—a historical development that Linton believes is relevant to the future of marijuana. “Who smokes opium anymore?” he asked. Linton believes his crops will soon be used as a sort of opioid-light—a less addictive, less harmful, and ultimately lifesaving alternative to the roughly 20 million prescriptions for opioid-based painkillers being written in this country every year.

He cracked open another bottle of water and scratched two items off his list. It was the top of another hour, and he was late for his next call, this one with Bay Street fund managers. He wanted to partner with big business and Canadian universities on an independent scientific lab to supply data on the effects of marijuana. They’d investigate claims that cannabis could heal concussions, and he could already see the lab producing time-released cannabinoid pills to help people sleep. “This is the logical next step,” he said. All he needed was \$5 million to get started.

Linton was on to something, and everyone on the call knew it. Most of the arguments for marijuana’s medicinal merits are based on little more than anecdotal evidence, even if doctors are already prescribing it in Canada as everything from a chronic-pain reliever to a wonder drug that may stop seizures among epileptic children.

There’s little clinical understanding of cannabis, largely because some countries (including the US) still officially consider it to have high abuse potential and no recognized medical use. Though a Canadian academic was part of the international team



**6** Stacked tomato cage-like gardening equipment.

**7** Inspecting crops inside a flowering room at the factory.

**8** Mammoth vats that once housed corn syrup for Hershey now hold water.

**9** Irrigation equipment inside the factory.

**10** Freshly extracted cannabis oil waiting to be refined, bottled, and sold.

**11** A technician adjusts the machinery inside the cannabis-oil “extraction room.”



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that mapped the plant's genome, the most significant research has thus far originated in Israel, where, in 1963, an organic chemist named Raphael Mechoulam examined five kilos of confiscated Moroccan hashish. He injected its chemical compounds into a group of aggressive monkeys. When the monkeys began to calm down, he knew he'd found the psychoactive ingredient he'd been looking for—one now known as THC.

Mechoulam isolated another well-known cannabinoid from the hash: cannabidiol (CBD), a non-psychoactive ingredient that seems to have the most potential to relieve pain. Subsequent studies have found more than seventy different cannabinoids in weed, all of which can be bred into unique strains that smell and look different from one another. Each contains a different ratio of individual cannabinoids and therefore affects humans in a different way. The CBD-heavy ones, which are most commonly drawn from the small and bushy indica plant, tend to leave users feeling physically mellow, sleepy, and relaxed. These are the types most commonly prescribed for their medicinal value. But it's the THC-heavy strains, which come from the much taller, loosely branched sativa plant, that produce mental highs—and are likely familiar to Canadians who get their bud in zip-lock baggies on the street.

The difficulty, for Linton, was going to be selling to all those people who just want to kick back with some cannabis—without compromising the company's medical credibility. To accomplish that, he was willing to split his company in two. He'd leave the medical side in the hands of pharmaceutical-grade pot producer Bedrocan. And he'd leave the recreational side to a Cambridge-educated lawyer who knew Snoop Dogg well enough to know you never called the rapper by his given name.

**H**IS PAY STUBS still say he was employee number five. But in reality, Mark Zekulin has become Linton's number two. A gifted policy wonk, Zekulin subjects all of Linton's ideas to a sober second thought before executing the ones that make the most sense. He is the bespectacled face of Tweed, often appearing on CBC News-world or *The National* to discuss the company. In public, he generally wears a pair of jeans and a creased grey blazer over a black Tweed T-shirt.



A decade earlier, Zekulin served as a senior advisor to Ontario finance minister Dwight Duncan before moving to England to study law. He was in his early thirties when he realized he hated being a lawyer. He'd always had an entrepreneurial mind, but he'd tried and failed twice to market inventions that he'd hoped would take off. By the time his first daughter was born, he was back in Canada, suffering a professional crisis. He went on paternity leave and took meetings with anyone willing to have lunch. Soon, he was convening in an Ottawa meatball joint with Linton to discuss a crazy new idea that Linton thought might be worth millions. They were going to squeeze their way into Ottawa's lucrative parking-meter business. Zekulin would get the paperwork in place to set up a smartphone app that allowed users to pay for parking, and Linton, who had made his first fortune when Ottawa was still known as "Silicon Valley North," would do what he did best: find someone else to bankroll it. It wasn't until a few meetings later that they realized the idea wasn't any good at all. Then Linton told Zekulin about "this other little business" he was starting with Rifici. "It's medicinal marijuana," Linton said. "Small market, big margins."

Zekulin talked it over with his wife, also a lawyer, and weighed the reputational risks of becoming a dealer of what was still technically an illegal substance. Days later, he joined Rifici—still, at that point, the CEO—in a small Ottawa office the company shared with a dozen other start-ups. Linton, already chairman of the board, was never in the office. He spent the majority of his time chasing potential investors, but few wanted anything to do with the company. Meanwhile, Zekulin sat in his cubicle and dreamt up branding strategies. Rifici put together the initial licence application and searched for a place to grow. They all read up on the published research that existed on cannabinoids.

Medicinal marijuana made its first appearance in Canada's legal landscape in 1997, when a Toronto epilepsy patient named Terrence Parker took the government to court. Parker—who used pot to control his seizures and had been arrested for possession the year before—argued that Canadians have a right to access necessary medical treatment without fear of arrest. He won the case, and soon everything changed. In 2000, the Chrétien

government awarded a five-year contract to Canada's first legal grow op: a Saskatoon-based company that grew bud in an underground mine in Flin Flon. A few months later, Health Canada created the Marihuana Medical Access Regulations (MMAR), a system that allowed patients to legally access medicinal marijuana.

Over the next twelve years, the number of registered patients across Canada went from 500 to 30,000. But the system became a largely unregulated mess. Dispensaries popped up across the country and began selling black-market bud to patients who argued that the official "government weed" was subpar. By 2013, Health Canada had come up with a replacement set of guidelines: the Marihuana for Medical

**Linton's company  
was fighting  
powdery mildew.  
Plants were dying.  
Most problematic  
of all, patients were  
telling them their  
bud was awful.**

Purposes Regulations (MMPR). These guidelines, which were struck down by a federal court judge in February 2016 and will be replaced by the government by late August, allowed for the privatized system under which Tweed and a batch of other producers were granted licences to serve the growing demand.

Two months after the MMPR was announced in June 2013, Linton and Rifici found the abandoned 500,000-square-foot chocolate factory, located on a forty-acre plot of land across the street from a police station. They bought the factory three days after Christmas at a cost of \$5 million and soon began the nearly \$20 million process of converting it into a grow op.

"The early days at the factory were a total shit show," Zekulin said. There was no running water. He wore a hard hat at his desk while construction crews pulled out the old industrial-grade chocolate equipment, replacing it with hydroponic gear and odour-control systems that nobody knew

how to use, let alone pay for. They had a website, but no weed and no money. Then Linton, who'd survived the dot-com bubble, flew to Toronto, took an elevator to the thirty-ninth floor of a Bay Street tower, and sweet-talked a financial titan into investing.

Tweed managed to obtain some marijuana seeds through the old MMAR, but its owners felt they needed more. On March 30, 2014, Rifici flew to Kelowna to collect what he believed to be legally obtained product—the police, though, suspected it was black-market bud. The next day, a team of plainclothes RCMP officers descended on the tarmac just before Rifici could start loading the cargo onto a chartered plane headed for Ontario. The shipment was seized, but no charges were laid. Still, the hangover from that encounter made it difficult for the team to celebrate four days later when the company was listed on the TSX Venture. It was eight months behind on planned marijuana production. The construction costs alone were pushing the company to the brink of insolvency. It was fighting powdery mildew. Plants were dying. Most problematic of all, patients were telling them their bud was awful.

Externally, they projected an image of confidence. On June 16, 2014, at the factory's grand opening, the mayor of Smiths Falls cut the ribbon for the cameras while a helicopter filled with the company's biggest Bay Street investors landed on the front lawn. Two months later, Rifici was fired. He has since filed a lawsuit seeking a year's salary—\$230,000—for breach of contract and wrongful dismissal, plus \$100,000 extra in damages. Tweed has filed a counterclaim alleging that Rifici "became increasingly obstructive" and pointed out that his stock on the day he was fired was valued at \$21 million. (Rifici has denied allegations of any wrongdoing.)

A stream of corporate executives interviewed for Rifici's old job. When none panned out, Linton, who was still chairman of Tweed's board, became interim CEO and elevated Zekulin to president. The interim part of Linton's title has since disappeared, and under his leadership, the company has grown so much that its market cap is now higher than those of its two largest competitors combined.

By the time the federal Liberals swept into power in 2015 and announced they intended to legalize marijuana for

recreational use, Canopy Growth owned two very distinct brands: Bedrocan, the most reputable brand in the medicinal-marijuana business, whose products Linton hoped would become as recognizable as Tylenol in pharmacies; and Tweed, which had rebranded the street names of its most popular strains. Old monikers—UK Cheese, Super Lemon Haze, and AK-47—were replaced with the more refined-sounding Balmoral, Houndstooth, and Herringbone. These products were joined by new Tweed-based inventions such as the mildly psychoactive CBD blend it calls “Watson,” after Sherlock Holmes’s colleague, and the more powerfully psychoactive blend it calls “Livingstone,” after the explorer who wandered deep into the heart of Africa and never came back.

It was all part of a strategy to provide Tweed with a lineup of combustible marijuana strains that could compete with Highland Scotch and Napoleon brandy on liquor-store shelves.

**Z**EKULIN reached over his lunch—a bacon-and-egg bagel—and hung up on the conference call he’d been listening to for more than an hour inside an office he kept on the thirty-fourth floor of First Canadian Place in Toronto. It was 3 p.m., and he was exhausted. On the other end had been a group of German businessmen. Under the terms of the partnership they were discussing, Tweed would invest expertise and money in a planned grow op in Germany, and also, laws permitting, execute the first legal export of dried cannabis from Canada.

Zekulin had come to Toronto from Ottawa to bring Tweed’s new creative director, Martin Strazovec, up to speed. A bearded rocker-type, Strazovec had two decades of experience in ad agencies, and had spent the last five years working primarily on customer-loyalty programs.

The company had a hip yet sophisticated aesthetic that Zekulin wanted reflected in everything, even the brown paper bags filled with Amanda’s cupcake mix that were sold alongside cannabis oils in its online store. (Amanda is the company’s head of medical outreach—her face is on the packaging.) On any given weekday, bins filled with 750 orders of everything from cannabis oil to jarred bud were rolling off one of the four loading docks behind a barbed-wire fence on Hershey Drive. Tweed

had already hired a Harvard-educated efficiency expert; he now spent his days implementing “the Toyota Way,” which involved streamlining production in preparation for the influx of recreational clients. But it was important that Tweed become a cultural brand, as well as a retail product, and that’s where Strazovec came in.

Zekulin laid bare the company vision: “We are beautifully set up for the next year and a half. But we need to get the experience perfect right now, on the packaging of the weed. When you open a jar from Tweed, we want the user experience to begin.”

Strazovec chimed in. “It’s similar to what Apple does with their products. It goes right down to the box.”

Zekulin nodded. “Minimalist, but memorable,” he said.

Then he moved on to the vision for the online store. “We want the site to feel like Holt Renfrew. You know the brand. You like the brand. You go there for the brand, but you also go there to get Hugo Boss.”

If Tweed was Holt Renfrew, then Leafy by Snoop was its Hugo Boss.

It was Snoop’s people who reached out first, looking for a Canadian partner to license the rights to Leafy by Snoop, the rapper’s personal brand of THC-heavy weed. First, there were emails, then phone calls, and finally visits to both the factory and the Farm. And though he wasn’t the only celebrity trying to capitalize on his image as a cannabis connoisseur—Woody Harrelson, Willie Nelson, and the children of the late Bob Marley have all been involved in marijuana businesses—Snoop was the first. His product was available only in Colorado, but he wanted to expand. His team looked north and soon read about the guys in the chocolate factory.

Zekulin handled the Snoop file, picking up members of the rapper’s entourage from the airport in his wife’s Subaru and driving them to the factory and the Farm and then back to Toronto. He’d spent months negotiating a deal that would see Tweed pay Snoop in stock and cash in return for the exclusive right to package some of Tweed’s most potent strains under Snoop’s corporate name and sell them through its online store.

The deal closed in mid-February 2016—the same week the NBA All-Star game was held in Toronto. While Linton was giving Liberal MP Bill Blair (former Toronto police

chief and the government’s point person on the legalization of marijuana) a guided tour of the Bedrocan facility, Zekulin met Snoop in an icy park for a photo shoot. Tweed got its shots and sent them out over the newswire along with a vague press release announcing the partnership. Zekulin never expected the photo and headline to make it onto the Thomson Reuters billboard in Times Square, but it did—and stayed there for a day.

It didn’t take long for the company to feel blowback from doctors who didn’t like the idea of writing medical scrips for cannabis from a company that had Snoop Dogg as a brand ambassador. “We no doubt lost some patients from that deal,” Zekulin said. “But we’d do it again.”

**I**T WAS HARVEST DAY in Smiths Falls, and Zekulin, dressed in a white lab coat, was giving a guided tour to Andrew Murie, the CEO of MADD Canada, the Canadian chapter of the US non-profit group Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Tweed had agreed to give an undisclosed amount to Murie’s organization for a campaign warning of the possible dangers of toking and driving. But the money would only go so far.

“We have a lot of concerns about the lack of data that’s out there,” Murie said. “Nobody knows right now how long you should wait after you smoke before you drive.”

“We’re trying to get ahead of this,” Zekulin replied. “The last thing we want is for somebody with legally purchased cannabis to crash a car and kill someone.”

In the factory, Zekulin pointed out mammoth vats that had once housed corn syrup but now held water that waited for vital plant nutrients to be stirred into it with the help of repurposed industrial-size candy mixers left behind by the Hershey Company. A steady stream of botanists and horticulturalists with clipboards and thermometric tools passed the men by.

“Everything feels a bit like an alien hatchery in here,” Zekulin said as he made his way toward the windowed door of the so-called mother room. Murie peered through the window at thirty different types of tall, thickly branched “mother plants” resting on steel tables in pots filled with ground-up coconut shells. For the sake of product consistency, Zekulin said, Tweed no longer grows anything from seeds, preferring to clip branches from the mother plants and move them into what was known as



the clone room. There, each plant was tagged with a loose-fitting medical band that would help trace it back to its mother. After spending two weeks growing under twenty-four-hour fluorescent lights, the plants would be transferred into the “vegetative room.” Then came the twelve “flowering rooms,” where, behind a door of pressurized air, they’d flower for eight weeks while being exposed to cycles of twelve hours of intense light and twelve hours of total darkness. Entering any of the flowering rooms required changing out of the lab coat and into something resembling a haz-mat suit.

Each room housed 500 plants. Once fully flowered, these plants are cut into pieces and their branches are rolled into a trim room, where trained barbers clip buds while bobbing their heads to the sound of *Rick Dees Weekly Top 40*. After it’s dried and cured, the weed is sealed into airtight buckets valued at \$9,000 each, then rolled into a massive security vault with a capacity of up to \$150 million in inventory.

“We’ve got three of these now,” Zekulin said. “This one, plus the one in Scarborough and a brand-new one at the farm in Niagara.” (The vault in Niagara was built so that the company would no longer have to transport plants all the way from the Farm to the factory to be legally trimmed.)

Last on the tour was the “extraction room,” where lab technicians laboured over machines that looked like paint mixers as they converted resin extracted from the plants into a dark substance that resembled a cross between tar and molasses. Zekulin said the crude-oil extract was akin to moonshine, because it had an 80 percent THC content. But he explained that Tweed had ways of diluting the concentration to accord with limits set by Health Canada—before sending the 100-millilitre bottles out the door with a \$110 price tag.

“This stuff’s the future,” Zekulin said. “We already can’t produce enough oil to keep up with demand.”

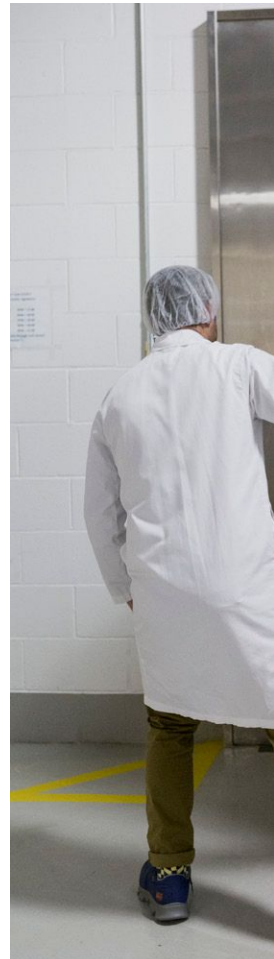
ON THE Tuesday morning after the Victoria Day long weekend, Linton stood under a staircase in Toronto City Hall, surrounded by a team of suits from Navigator. He’d hired the \$600-an-hour PR firm mostly to lobby MPs on his behalf, but now it was helping him organize a press conference. The event was a calculated response to a decision made by the City



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15







- 12** Airtight bags of dried cannabis await inspection.
- 13** Boxes of jarred cannabis sit on shelves in the shipping room.
- 14** Tweed's three security vaults can each store up to \$150 million worth of produce.
- 15** A bucket filled with \$9,000 worth of Balmoral.
- 16** Tweed's "hip yet sophisticated" brand identity is reflected in its packaging.



of Toronto to hand out letters to seventy-eight of the city's illegal marijuana dispensaries indicating they had seventy-two hours to pack up their shops. As a crowd of camera operators and reporters fixed their lenses on Linton's face, he said he wanted everyone to know that Canopy owned the only lawful producer in Toronto (Bedrocan) and that his company would offer a same-day delivery alternative to any patients who ordered online before noon. It was a well-timed and effectively placed advertisement.

After the media had dispersed, Linton made his way to his next engagement. He rolled his suitcase through a revolving door and disappeared into the King Edward Hotel, where he was scheduled to address a gathering of established and would-be tycoons.

The financiers waited eagerly for their chance to shake his hand and give him their cards. He wasn't the only CEO of a licensed producer in the room, but he was the one garnering the most attention. Among the rivals present was Denis Arsenault, CEO of New Brunswick's Organigram. "I like Linton, and I like Zekulin even more," he said. "So I'm not going to say anything negative about my competitor. But they bled nearly \$4 million last quarter. We might be smaller, but we're cash-flow positive. There's a saying in business: make sure your home front is rock solid before you start venturing to far-off lands. Should we be on all seven continents and in the research business and studying which creams can be made out of what? It's great for press releases, but that's a recipe for failure."

Soon Linton was sitting under a crystal chandelier inside an opulent domed ballroom, smiling and nodding while one of this country's leading lawyers specializing in venture capital welcomed him to the stage as "the perfect CEO to trailblaze Canopy in this new industry and lead what will become the most diverse cannabis brand in Canada and then the world."

Linton jumped onto the stage and began with the basics: you needed a licence and at least \$10 million before you could contemplate doing what he'd done even on a fraction of the scale. He switched slides and was suddenly standing in front of a map of the world boasting his company's logo next to Jamaica, Uruguay, Brazil, Australia, South Africa, and Germany—all countries in which he'd begun negotiating

partnerships and, in some cases, exploring the possibility of setting up foreign-based grow ops.

His mic time drawing to a close, Linton drifted into a story about the time Blair had dropped by the Bedrocan grow op—without kicking down the door. The crowd laughed, and Linton shuffled off the stage while Blair—the one-time head of the city's now-defunct "morality squad" and the person handpicked by Trudeau to spearhead marijuana reform—made his way toward the podium. The legitimized drug dealer in the crisp blue suit, having just outlined his plan for a global empire, now passed the microphone to a retired cop who was trying to pull the force off the front line of the war on drugs.

Blair quickly detailed why he no longer believed in the prohibition of a drug that, in 2015, 20 percent of Canadians admitted to having used the year before. He said that once a legitimate recreational model emerged and legal marijuana was being properly regulated and sold, the country would see not only less use among youth, but also a massive reduction in gang violence. He said marijuana had been the main source of economic profit for organized crime throughout his entire career. And only now was he actually going to be able to do anything major to stop it.

Then Blair described a future in which medicinal and recreational marijuana markets existed independently of one another, and told the financiers what they already knew: from the ashes of a criminal industry, billions of dollars would soon be flowing into a fresh set of hands. And though he made it clear there'd be room for business to make its money, he made it even more clear that he didn't give a damn about the brands. All he cared about was getting the criminals out of the game and getting joints out of kids' hands.

"We don't want to be seen as promoting the use of marijuana," he said. "I believe marijuana is not a benign substance. There's a lot of science that says the developing or adolescent brain is put at greater risk with marijuana, and there is certainly an age below which it should not be used. We're going to really educate people."

**T**HE DAY AFTER Linton headed home to Ottawa, police officers spread out across Toronto and raided forty-three marijuana dispensaries, arresting ninety people



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and laying 186 trafficking charges. They seized cannabis, resin, hashish, pills, chocolate, cookies, candies, bars, e-cigarettes, drinks, oils, and spreads. Then they packaged it all into garbage bags, laid a fraction of the loot on the ground and on tables inside police headquarters, and hosted a press conference to inform citizens that, for the time being, the laws against marijuana trafficking were still in effect.

Marc Emery, the outspoken self-proclaimed “Prince of Pot,” and his wife, Jodie, took to the city’s streets with megaphones and protested what they called a reversion to the prohibition policies of old. Emery, who spent almost five years in a Mississippi prison for flouting US federal law after mailing marijuana seeds from BC into the States, was somewhat less conspicuous than his wife, who crashed the press conference, scolded Toronto’s police chief, and then bad-mouthed licensed producers.

“This is about the corporate profits of stock-market businesses that have sent police to arrest people to protect their own financial interest,” she said. “That is sick and disgusting.”

Soon, Linton and Zekulin began attracting ire on the street and social media. They were being accused of selling out everyone else in the industry, of teaching police how to differentiate between legal marijuana and the knock-off stock, and of trying to shut everyone but themselves out of the market. It didn’t help Tweed’s reputation with the dispensary crowd that its largest shareholder had once been the CFO of the federal Liberals. Or that Zekulin had previously worked for Ontario’s finance minister. Or that Linton had just introduced the former chief of the Toronto Police Service to a bunch of Bay Streeters looking to cash in on a plant that the Emerys and others believed every human had the right to access. To many, Canopy had become just another economic juggernaut.

Both Linton and Zekulin spent most of the day on television or on the phone with newspapers, trying to debunk the “conspiracy theories” and play down their company’s size and power. Zekulin slept in a Toronto hotel that night. The next morning, he looked like a man who’d been up in the dark reading all the nasty things being said about him on Twitter. He tossed his wrinkled blazer into the backseat of his rental and beat a quick retreat, passing

the shuttered remnants of Toronto’s dispensary scene before heading up to Barrie, Ontario, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Tweed’s latest creation, Tweed Main Street—a classy storefront that looked like an up-market dispensary although it sold coffee, T-shirts, and mugs.

The shop was tucked between a payday-loan store and a movie theatre. Billed as a drop-in centre that would help would-be patients find compassionate doctors willing to write scripts for medicinal marijuana, it was a way to get the name, brand, and, even more importantly, the image of “a hip yet professional company” out into the community. There were already three Tweed Main Street shops in Ontario, and many more were planned for other markets across the country. The closest thing to actual marijuana on offer? Pamphlets that put a Tweed spin on the old psychotropic favourites from the street: “Some people find Houndstooth (Super Lemon Haze) helpful with stress relief, pain management and appetite stimulation.”

The ribbon cut, Zekulin ate cake and stood on the sidewalk greeting prospective patients, who were arriving by skateboard with black-market THC sodas already in hand and filtering out of the payday-loan place next door. Then he got back in the car and turned on the air conditioning. It was Friday afternoon and it was hot—and while Linton was off somewhere “kicking the tires” of a small licensed producer he hoped to buy out of the game, Zekulin was heading north. He shook his head as he thought back to their first meeting, over a plate of meatballs, and how excited he’d been when Linton had asked him whether he’d be interested in going into parking meters.

“Shit,” Zekulin said. “That wasn’t even three years ago.”

“It wasn’t easy jumping into this. My dad didn’t really want me to do it. My grandmother still just smiles and nods when I talk about what I do, but she’ll never come around. That’s just how it is.”

He took a right off the highway and drove over a bridge—before long, we were parked on the side of a gravel road and looking out at a 100,000-square-foot chunk of land nestled between a forest and a field. It seemed as good a place as any to build another greenhouse. The company was still young, but it was high time to get growing. 🌱



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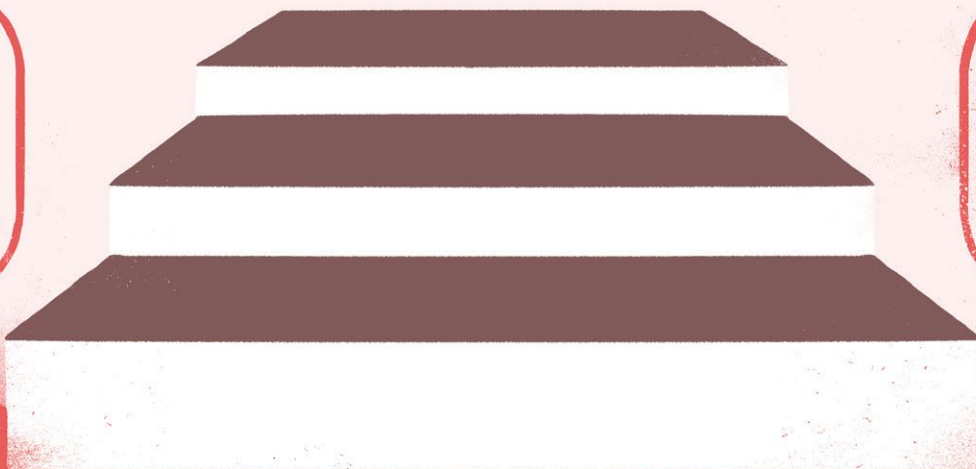
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## SPORTS

# The Wrong Track

*A Canadian medallist on  
why our Olympic strategy betrays the spirit of the Games*

BY THOMAS HALL

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SÉBASTIEN THIBAUT

**H**E FIRST stood out to me in a row of shirtless boys in a black-and-white photograph taken in the early 1980s in what was then East Germany. All arms and legs, they were of different heights, lined up against a mark someone had painted on the wall. One hatchet-faced boy fell well short of it. At that moment, he became my hero. Andreas Dittmer, who went on to become a five-time Olympic medallist, was, arguably, also the best sprint canoeist ever.

Dittmer, known as “Stifti” (a German nickname for “skinny”) because he grew to be taller and slimmer than most sprint canoeists, was one of the best technicians the sport has ever seen. I lost to him in every race for about four years, only beating him twice in the twilight of his career. When most of us were trying to convince our bodies not to shut down with pain, Dittmer would, with a few snappy strokes, gain a boat length or two and win with seeming ease.

He retired after Beijing in 2008. Because he was a friend to many Canadian paddlers, we invited him to our spring training camp in Florida to tell us some of his secrets. We discovered that there were none. His achievements were the result of hard work and of an intangible quality that allowed him to flourish under a punishing training regimen.

Most countries that compete at the Olympics employ some sort of economic and logistical system to manage recreational and competitive sport. The nation that backed Dittmer still has one of the world’s best. Germany’s promotion of sport science, training centres, and technology made us feel primitive in comparison: our own system was far less centralized and science based. Dittmer wasn’t a success only because he was born with natural talent and drive; he had the best framework to help him perfect the intricacies of the sprint canoe stroke, which, because of the required balance, rotation, and millisecond timing, is as complicated a movement as any you will find in sport.

When most Canadians watch the Olympics, this is the kind of narrative they crave: a passionately motivated athlete overcomes adversity and attains glory on behalf of this country—a country that, in turn, supplies them with the support they need to perfect their métier. I like to think that I embodied a version of this narrative myself back at the 2008 Olympics, when I won a bronze medal for Canada in sprint canoe. Like a young Dittmer, I was far from a perfect physical specimen, and coaches originally doubted my potential because of my lack of size and power. But thanks to the support I received from them and my family and more than ten years’ worth of two or three training sessions a day, I took my place on the Olympic podium.

Today I ask myself, if I had entered my sport in the current era of Canadian Olympic funding, would I have earned that bronze? Since the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, this country’s athletes have won an unprecedented number of medals. But the system that I came up in is not the same one that young athletes know today, thanks to Own the Podium (OTP)—a program conceived to improve and professionalize our approach to Olympic competition. It has indeed resulted in more medals, but the price we have paid for this bounty has been steep: not all athletes, and not all



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sports, are benefiting. OTP is a short-term funding strategy that gives low priority to any sport, or athlete, unlikely to yield a dividend of gold, silver, or bronze on the country's "investment." That approach is antithetical to Canadian values and to the spirit of sport. It also works against the initiative's own goals. Going into this summer's Rio Olympics, my thoughts have turned to what the future may hold—for the generations of Olympians to come and for the country that is watching.

**O**TP WAS CREATED, in part, to help save national pride. In the lead-up to the 2010 Winter Olympics, Canada held the distinction of being the only country not to have won a single gold medal while hosting an Olympics—not once, but twice (Montreal in 1976 and Calgary in 1988).

The Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC), under the leadership of John Furlong, wanted to make sure we wouldn't be embarrassed again.

In early 2004, the major players in the Canadian sport system—including Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), and VANOC—met to talk about how Canada could top the medal table in Vancouver. They set a goal of winning thirty-five medals at the Games—a number that, they predicted, would put Canada atop the rankings. (By comparison, Canada won seventeen medals at the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City, a result that put us in fourth place behind Germany, the United States, and Norway.)

Leading the effort was Cathy Priestner-Allinger, who took silver at the 1976 Games in Innsbruck, Austria—the first

Canadian to have won a speed-skating medal in twenty-four years. Now a sixty-year-old veteran of the international sport strategizing circuit, she examined everything within the Canadian system, from coaching expertise to sport medicine and administration. Priestner-Allinger found a system in disarray: "No one was really working together," she says. The following year, her team produced a report, *Own the Podium—2010*, which has come to define the Canadian sport system. The twenty-eight-page report identified two ways to boost Canada's Olympic medal count: increase the number of high-level athletes, and increase the odds that their athletic potential could be converted into medals.

The Vancouver Games were five-and-a-half years away, far short of the eight to twelve years it normally takes an athlete to develop Olympic medal potential. So a big part of her strategy involved targeting athletes already winning medals, and giving them the very best in sport science, coaching, and technology. She also recommended recruiting existing stars from complementary summer sports: speed skating would take cyclists and in-line skaters; freestyle skiing would look to gymnasts; bobsleigh would recruit football players and track sprinters.

More generally, the report called for groups such as Sport Canada, the COC, and the Canadian Paralympic Committee—the major funders of high-performance sport, which includes the Olympics and other competitions that keep us glued to our TVs—to pool their budgets under the OTP umbrella, which would focus "excellence" funding in a way that ruthlessly promoted medal winnability.

The federal government approved the plan and by 2010 had more than doubled Canada's sport investment to \$160 million, approximately \$65 million of which was directed by OTP. The sports that got the new money weren't necessarily ones that we think of as being prototypically Canadian, or ones that have the most participants. Of the ten sports with the highest number of participants—including hockey, soccer, baseball, volleyball, alpine skiing, cycling, swimming, and badminton—only women's hockey, men's and women's swimming, cycling, and alpine skiing would be significantly funded. This sea change in government sport policy attracted little attention from the broader



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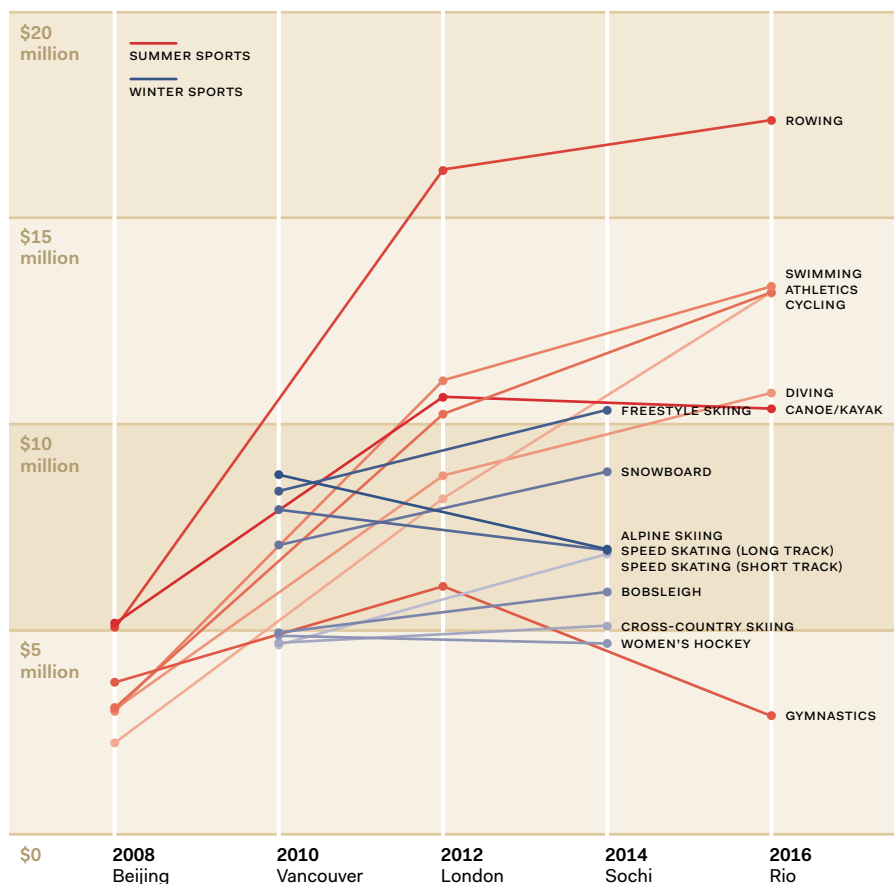
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ILLUSTRATIONS: GRACIA LAM



## Canada's highest-funded Olympic sports, 2008–2016



public at the time: most Canadians don't pay much attention to the Olympics when the Games aren't actually being played. But within sport circles, the effect was revolutionary.

**B**EFORE OTP, about 60 percent of a sport's funding was based on performance, while the rest was based on criteria such as membership numbers, how many provinces competed in the sport, and coaching programs. In effect, decisions were made according to how well an organization was run and how much of an impact it had on Canadians. The traditional goals of encouraging participation—through the development of national athletic associations or by getting kids and adults active in sport, for example—had now been eclipsed by a cost-benefit approach that sought to squeeze the highest number of medals out of the available budget dollars.

OTP is now a well-established presence within Canadian sport. Staffed by advisors and analysts working out of a modest one-storey office building on an industrial strip in Ottawa, it briefs Sport Canada on

how to spend the latter's chunk of the now roughly \$200 million the federal government commits to sport each year.

Most of that money flows to national organizations, the groups tasked with running sport in Canada. Canada Soccer, for example, isn't responsible only for the likes of star forward Christine Sinclair; it also sets the general guidelines that govern little-league games, and everything in between. Since the establishment of OTP, sport funding has been divided into "core funding"—the model that existed pre-2004—and "excellence funding," the amount that OTP influences.

All high-performance sports still go through the pre-OTP process for core funding, which underwrites staffing and some development programs. But the amount available hasn't changed in more than a decade. The new OTP funding, meanwhile, is divided into three tiers. A sport with low medal-earning potential, such as ski jumping, might get \$50,000—while a discipline with higher medal potential, such as track and field (formally known as athletics), may get \$13 million. Moreover,

this money comes with strings: OTP monitors how the money is spent *within* each sport. If OTP advisors believe funds are being squandered on athletes or projects that won't generate medals, the funding gets cut.

Many athletes' careers reflect natural dips and curves—the results of delayed physical maturity, moving up to a different age group, or getting sick or injured at the wrong time. In my early twenties, my performance plateaued, and I wrestled with whether or not to continue. At these junctures, the existence of funding can be crucial. If, during this lull, I had suddenly been forced to pay for two months a year in Europe, four months of training camp, and my coach's salary, I would have had to quit.

The success of the Vancouver Olympics was enough to temporarily silence OTP critics. In the total medal count, Canada came third, trailing the United States and Germany. Our fourteen gold medals put us ahead of every other country. A poll conducted after Vancouver found that 95 percent of Canadians were happy with their country's 2010 performance.

Canadian athletes, flushed with the successes of Beijing and Vancouver, and backed by a plan that seemed to be working, marched confidently into the 2012 Summer Games in London. The result? "We did okay," Merklinger tells me. "Our goal was to finish top twelve in total medals, and we ended up tied for thirteenth."

It's true that Canadian Olympians traditionally don't come out with as many medals at Summer Games. But the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi also represented a come-down from Vancouver: Canada came in fourth in total medals, and third in golds. Around this time, an OTP review of Canadian athletes found that for the first time since the mid-1990s, the number of athletes finishing in the top five and top eight at the Olympics—positions that indicate future medal potential—was in decline.

By the time Sochi came around in 2014, Canada had been fixating on converting athletic potential into gold in a select number of sports—and only at the highest level of athletic potential within those sports—for about a decade. Now, as elite athletes aged out of the system, the lack of investment in the development of a broad range of candidates from the next generation was beginning to show. "OTP was not initially meant to be sustainable for the





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whole system,” says Priestner-Allinger, who went on to consult with the Russians in 2014. “It was only focused on 2010 medals.”

The sport that best demonstrates the system’s strengths and weaknesses may be speed skating, which received one of the highest OTP funding amounts from 2006 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2014. It also boasts one of Canada’s most respected professional athletes, Clara Hughes. With six Olympic medals, she is tied with Cindy Klassen as Canada’s most decorated Olympian. Hughes is also one of only five athletes to have won medals (in her case, for cycling and speed skating) at both the Summer and Winter Olympics.

“I only did community sport growing up,” Hughes says from her home in Canmore, Alberta. “I had trouble as an adolescent with dysfunction and delinquency. But when I saw Gaétan Boucher at the Olympics in ’88, I decided I was going to speed skate for Canada at the Olympics one day.”

Hughes won medals in cycling at the 1996 Summer Games before switching to speed skating after the 2000 Olympics. At the 2002 Games, she was part of a speed-skating team that accounted for more than half of Canada’s total medals. That success is part of the reason speed skating became one of Own the Podium’s early darlings.

At the Turin Games in 2006, two years into the OTP program, Speed Skating Canada saw the team’s best-ever Olympic performance, and Hughes became an Olympic champion. She was a favourite for Vancouver, and Canada’s speed skaters were now predicted to win more than half of the twenty speed-skating events in 2010.

But despite the millions of dollars in OTP funding spent in the lead-up to Vancouver on equipment such as a skating treadmill and altitude tents—as well as perks meant to make training easier, such as apartment rentals near the Vancouver Olympic oval—the speed-skating team failed to match its 2006 performance. At Sochi, four years after Vancouver and ten years after the introduction of OTP, speed skating had its worst Olympic performance since 1994, coming away with just five medals—a performance so lacklustre that OTP cut Speed Skating’s budget by \$517,000.

Speed skating now finds itself in the position of having to earn its way back into full OTP funding by proving its commitment to winning Olympic medals. Administrators have trimmed funding for Olympic-level

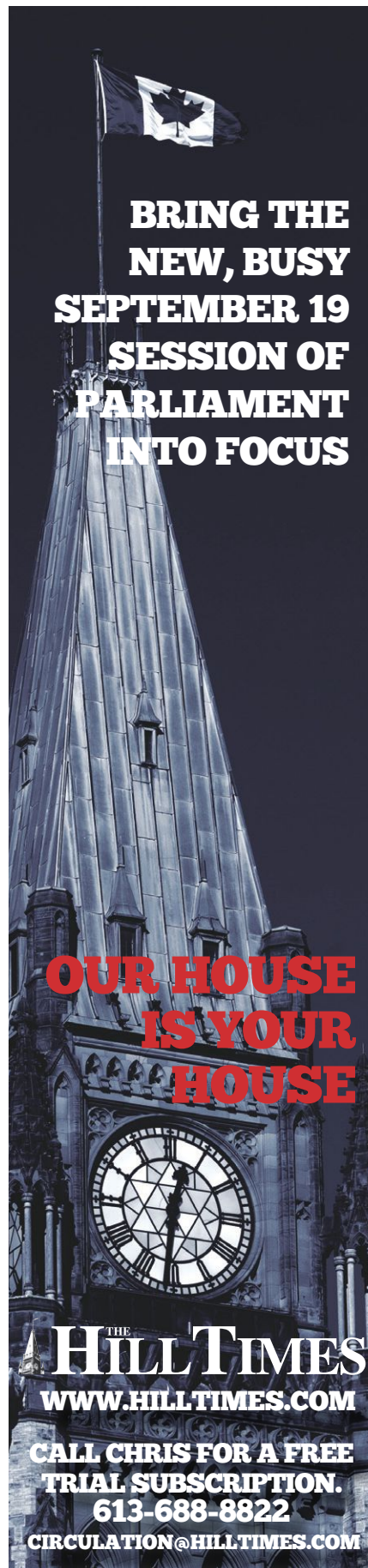
athletes and coaches who weren’t believed to be essential for winning medals, and, more importantly, have shuffled money away from development projects to high-performance. “We had to scale back on a lot of our other programming for a couple of years,” says Ian Moss, CEO of Speed Skating Canada.

Among the major programs it scaled back was one that helped local clubs buy the pads that go around the edges of skating ovals. Padding provides essential protection for athletes who, dressed in thin spandex, zip along at fifty kilometres an hour with razors strapped to their feet—but it’s also very expensive.

Moss says that short-term cuts are inevitable. Once funding increases again, the organization will be able to shift some money back into development. “Two years later, we just had our best season in fifteen years in both short and long track. We’ve got six world champions, twenty-four world championship medals, and seventy-four podium performances at world cups this year. And we’re doing it on a lot less money.”

The work of calculating the amount of money that goes into a single Olympic medal win is a bit crude, but some rough arithmetic is possible. Canadian media were quick to price Jan Hudec’s bronze medal in downhill skiing, the first since 1994, at \$7 million—the total amount OTP spent on Alpine Canada from 2010 to 2014. (Hudec, who has suffered a series of knee injuries but now says he is healthy, will be eligible to ski for the Czech Republic in the 2018 Pyeongchang Games, because Ski Canada wouldn’t cover the reported \$35,000 cost of having a ski technician support him during this year’s World Cup season.) My own Olympic medal, one of two won by Canoe Kayak Canada in Beijing, could be “priced” at slightly more than \$2.5 million using a similar analysis.

Speed Skating Canada is lucky, relatively speaking: its history of medal winning—and the sheer number of skating medals available at a single Games—means it’s unlikely that OTP will cut all of its high-performance funding. If Canada wants to “win” another Winter Olympics, it needs speed skating and its twenty medal events. However, water polo, with only two medal events, isn’t so fortunate. For the men’s water polo team, the distinction between have and have-not sports has been devastating.



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## Trigger warning for a course in developmental psychology

BY STEVIE HOWELL

Prediction is not only possible,  
it's paramount. Milestones  
make us human. Upright,  
time-bound. Or is that poetry,  
or is that music. Or is that sports,  
or breweries. Or pharmaceuticals,  
or suicide. Or none of the above?

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head up in a cobra pose,  
these mental Likert checkboxes of Norms  
hover over your tiny bed  
like mobile elements, like the stars  
you've yet to witness.  
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we call unconditional,  
in a manner too expansive for the present  
discussion. In its absence,  
like water, you may cycle through three states  
of identity—moratorium,

diffusion, foreclosure—

It's not your fault no one taught you awe  
or boundaries.  
But it's hard to reach the eudaimonic  
without a map,  
sea-legs, a second-language, etc. It's not  
impossible, per se,  
but it's difficult—actually changing, post-ideal  
window of acquisition.  
It's somewhat unheard of. Unusual. Abnormal,  
even.

"We got our funding cut a few months before the Pan Am Games in 2015, which were the Olympic qualifiers," said goaltender Robin Randall, who was a member of the Olympic men's water polo team in 2008 (the first since 1984 to qualify for the Games). "We lost about \$600,000 and finished ninth at worlds. Then at Pan Ams, we lost to the US in the semifinal by one point. Winning would've qualified us."

It may seem too easy to blame not making it to the Games on one factor—even if that factor is the sudden loss of more than half a million dollars—but the impacts of such financial shortfalls should not be underestimated. Randall is convinced that his team was good enough to compete in Rio. But he's more concerned about how the next cohort of water polo players will get to 2020 without funding for travel and coaches.

And water polo isn't the only sport that took this kind of financial hit. Field Hockey Canada suffered a similar fate when its men's \$900,000 budget evaporated in 2013.

Canadian sport undeniably needed and needs a group such as OTP, one devoted to helping athletes achieve the most they possibly can at the end of their careers. It allowed me—an athlete who was already competing at an elite level internationally when OTP began—to feel less like an amateur next to competitors in Dittmer's class. It helped fund my coaching, sport science, and travel. I doubt that I would have stood on the podium waving at my parents in Beijing eight years ago if it had not been for the funding that came with OTP. But there is a big difference between managing a "top-up" pool of excellence money—OTP's mandate—and being in de facto control of a large portion of the money supporting Canada's sport organizations. In our quest to win gold in Vancouver, we built a top-heavy sport system focused primarily on winning Olympic medals; the sacrifice worked, briefly, but now it is time to consider something more long-term.

JUSTIN TRUDEAU's Liberal government has announced that it may review the way money is allocated under OTP's "targeted excellence" program. But for such a review to be meaningful, Canada must first address the basic question of what goals we are seeking to advance through our taxpayer-funded sport system. And the simplest way to begin that analysis is with the principles enshrined in law. According to Canada's Physical Activity and Sport Act, "The objectives of the Government of Canada's policy regarding sport are: (a) to increase participation in the practice of sport and support the pursuit of excellence in sport; and (b) to build capacity in the Canadian sport system." (In this sense, "participation" refers to the country's millions of recreational athletes, not just the ones who devote their lives to a sport.) The same priorities are embedded in the Olympic Charter, which defines the Olympic movement as one meant to "build a better world by educating youth through sport."

Since 2004, Canada's direct investment in sport has more than doubled. But the total size of the financial pie matters less than how it is divided: according to a 2013 parliamentary background paper, only 13 percent of the government's 2009-10 investment in



sport went toward boosting participation, despite the fact that participation rates in organized sport have declined by 17 per cent since 1992—with the sharpest decline among young adults. That is bad not only for Canadians, but for high-performance sport as a whole. That age group represents the next generation of Olympic medallists.

After the London Games in 2012, OTP finessed its development policy slightly, announcing that it would direct a portion of its budget—about \$20 million over four years—toward younger athletes. These athletes would get the best coaching, sport science, and financial support to give them the best chance of winning future medals. That may sound far-sighted. But it won't do much to increase the broad athletic base required to produce and sustain a large pool of high-level athletes across a wide range of sports. In fact, extending OTP's elitist mantra to younger and younger athletes could make it even harder for the likes of Dittmer and Hughes (and, yes, me) to get their shot at the Olympics.

So what strategy would encourage Canadians to participate in a variety of sports, create a deep talent pool, and also produce enough athletes at the elite level to

ensure that Canada is properly represented among Olympic medallists every two years? Ultimately, there is no substitute for greater funding. Sport plays such a huge role in the lives of Canadians—as exercise, as an engine of self-esteem, as a model of teamwork, and as a source of national pride. And yet the budget allotted to sport by our federal government is minuscule relative to those of other government programs.

But if total spending on sport remains static, forcing us to decide between an impressive medal count and a more inclusive approach to participation and sporting excellence, let us prioritize the latter.

“Winning is not everything, and medals are not everything,” says Clara Hughes. “I have finished in second-to-last place in the Olympics and been profoundly affected as a human being, and I’ve won the Olympics and been dragged to the depths of despair as a human being. So many times, I was asked about winning and ‘owning the podium,’ and I always said, ‘Those are not my words; I do not feel that way.’”

To emphasize her point, she returns to speed-skating great Gaétan Boucher and the moment she was inspired to drop her habit of smoking a pack a day.

“I always think of Gaétan and when I saw him skate his last race. He finished in ninth place. He went into it, I don’t know in what state; he just collapsed on the last lap in Calgary because he had gone so hard. He went from world-record pace to ninth, and it was the most awesome thing I had seen in my life up to that point. To see someone care for something and struggle and suffer for something—it changed my life, seeing it. And he didn’t win. I always remembered that.”

I didn’t start canoeing because I wanted to win an Olympic medal. I didn’t decide one day when I was eleven that I was going to devote most of my teens and my entire twenties to being an athlete—to not partying, to twenty workouts a week, to delaying my education by eight years, to not getting work experience, to accumulating debt—all so I could stand on a podium. I paddled because I loved it. And to reduce almost twenty years of effort to how many medals I won cheapens not only my sacrifices, but also the efforts of the coaches, volunteers, and administrators who make sport possible in Canada. Hughes is right. Sport isn’t about which canoe crosses the finish line first. It’s about what we put into the stroke. ☿



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## COMICS

# Rescue Cat

*Margaret Atwood reimagines the everyday feline  
as a comic-book superhero*

BY MARGARET ATWOOD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHNNIE CHRISTMAS

COLOURS BY TAMRA BONVILLAIN

SOME FIND IT STRANGE that a person known for her novels and poetry would take to writing comic books called *Angel Catbird*. But I myself don't find it very strange. I was born in 1939 and thus of a reading age when the war ended and colour comics made a booming comeback. Not only did I read masses of comics in magazine form, I encountered many of the same characters in the weekend newspapers. Some of the comics were funny: *Little Lulu*, *Li'l Abner*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Blondie*, and so forth. Some were serious: *Steve Canyon*, *Rip Kirby*, and the unfathomable *Mary Worth*. And some were superheroes: *Batman*, *Wonder Woman*, *Superman*, *Green Lantern*, and their ilk. Some even aimed at improving young minds: the *Classic Comics* series had an educational bent. And some were just weird.

In this last category, I'd place *Mandrake the Magician*, *Little Orphan Annie*—in which nobody had pupils in their eyes—and *Dick Tracy*: surrealist masterpieces, all of them, though somewhat disturbing for children. A criminal who could assume anyone's face, behind which he looked like melting Swiss cheese? It was alarmingly close to Salvador Dalí, and kept me awake nights.

Not only did I read all of these comics, I drew comics of my own. The earliest ones featured two flying rabbit superheroes. My older brother had a much larger stable of characters. They had more gravitas: they went in for large-scale warfare, whereas my own superheroes fooled around with the odd bullet. Along with the superhero rabbits, I drew winged flying cats, many with balloons attached to them. I was obsessed with balloons, as no balloons were available during the war. So I'd seen pictures of them, but never the actual thing. It was similar with the cats:

I wasn't allowed to have one, because we were up in the Canadian forests a lot. How would the cat travel? Once there, wouldn't it run away and be eaten by mink? Very likely. So, for the first part of my life, my cats were flying dream cats.

Time passed, and both the balloons and the cats materialized in my real life. The balloons were a disappointment, liable as they were to burst and deflate; the cats were not. For over fifty years, I was a dedicated cat person. My cats were a pleasure, a comfort, and an aid to composition. The only reason I don't have one now is that I'm afraid of tripping on it. That, and of leaving it an orphan, so to speak.

As the 1940s changed into the 1950s and I became a teenager, the comic that preoccupied me the most was Walt Kelly's *Pogo*, which, with its cast of swamp critters combined with its satire of the McCarthy era's excesses, set a new benchmark: how to be entertainingly serious while also being seriously entertaining. Meanwhile, I was continuing to draw and to design the odd visual object—posters, for the silk-screen poster business I was running on the Ping-Pong table in the late fifties, and book covers, for my own first books, because that was cheaper than paying a pro.

In the seventies, I drew a sort-of political strip called *Kanadian Kultchur Komix*. I then took to drawing a yearly strip called *Book Tour Comix*, which I would send to my publishers at Christmas to make them feel guilty. (That didn't succeed.) It's no coincidence that the narrator of my 1972 novel, *Surfacing*, is an illustrator and that the narrator of my 1988 novel, *Cat's Eye*, is a figurative painter. We all have unlined lives. (Note that none of these narrators has ever been a ballet dancer. I did try ballet, briefly, but it made me dizzy.)

And I continued to read comics, watching the emergence of a new generation of psychologically complex characters (Spider-Man, who begat Wolverine, et cetera). Then came the emergence of graphic novels, with such now-classics as *Maus* and *Persepolis*: great-grandchildren of *Pogo*, whether they knew it or not. Meanwhile, I had become more and more immersed in the world of bird conservation. I now had a burden of guilt from my many years of cat companionship, for my cats had gone in and out of the house, busying themselves with their cat affairs, which included the killing of small animals and birds. These would turn



up as gifts, placed thoughtfully either on my pillow instead of a chocolate, or on the front doormat. Sometimes it would not even be a whole animal. One of my cats donated only the gizzards.

From this collision between my comic-reading-and-writing self and the bird blood on my hands, Angel Catbird was born. I pondered him for several years, and even did some preliminary sketches. He would be a combination of cat, owl, and human being, and he would thus have an identity conflict—do I save this baby robin, or do I eat it? But he would understand both sides of the question. He would be a flying carnivore's dilemma.

But Angel Catbird would have to look better than the flying cats I'd drawn in my childhood—two-dimensional and wooden—and better also than my own later cartoons, which were fairly basic and lumpy. I wanted Angel Catbird to look sexy, like the superhero and noir comics I'd read in the forties. So I needed a co-author. But how to find one? This wasn't a world of which I had much knowledge. Then up on my Twitter feed popped a possible answer. A person called Hope Nicholson was resurrecting one of the forgotten Canadian superhero comics of the wartime 1940s and fundraising it via Kickstarter. Not only that, Hope lived in Toronto.

I put the case for Angel Catbird to her, and, lo and behold, she came onboard and connected me with artist Johnnie Christmas, who could draw just the right kinds of muscles and also owl claws, and with publisher Dark Horse Comics. Watching Angel Catbird come to life has been hugely engaging. There was, for instance, a long email debate about Angel's pants. He had to have pants of some kind. Feather pants, or what? And if feathers, what kind of feathers? And should these pants be underneath his human pants and just sort of emerge? How should they manifest themselves? Questions would be asked, and we needed to have answers.

And what about Cate Leone, the love interest? What would a girl who is also a cat wear while singing in a nightclub act? Boots with fur trim and claws on the toes? Blood-drop earrings? Such questions occupy my waking hours. What sort of furniture should Count Catula—part bat, part cat, part vampire—have in his castle? Should some of it be upside down, considering the habits of bats? How to make a white Egyptian vulture look seductive?

(You know what they eat, right?) Should Octopuss have a cat face and tentacle hair? Should Cate Leone have a rival for Angel Catbird's attentions—a part girl, part owl called AtheenOwl? I'm thinking yes. In her human form, does she work at Hooters, or is that a pun too far? So. Like that.

The science-and-conservation side to this project is supplied by Nature Canada, which is not only contributing the statistics found in the banners at the bottoms of the pages, but also running a #SafeCatSafeBird outreach campaign to urge cat owners not to

for stressed forests, since it is migratory songbirds that weed insect pests out of trees. Cats aren't the only factor in the decline of birds, of course—habitat loss, pesticides, and glass windows all play a part—but they're a big factor.

There used to be an elephant who came around to grade schools. He was called Elmer the Safety Elephant, and he gave advice on crossing streets safely. If your school had managed a year without a street accident, Elmer gave you a flag. In my wildest dreams, Angel Catbird and Cate Leone,



let their cats range freely. The mortality figures for free-range cats are shockingly high: they get bitten in fights, hit by cars, eaten by foxes, and that's just the beginning. So it's good for cats and good for birds to keep domestic cats safe and in conditions in which they can't contribute to the billions of annual bird deaths attributed to cats.

On [catsandbirds.ca](http://catsandbirds.ca), cat owners can take the pledge; mounting pledge numbers could also mean better conditions

and maybe even Count Catula, would go around and give something—a flag, a trophy?—to schools that had gathered a certain number of safe-cat pledges.

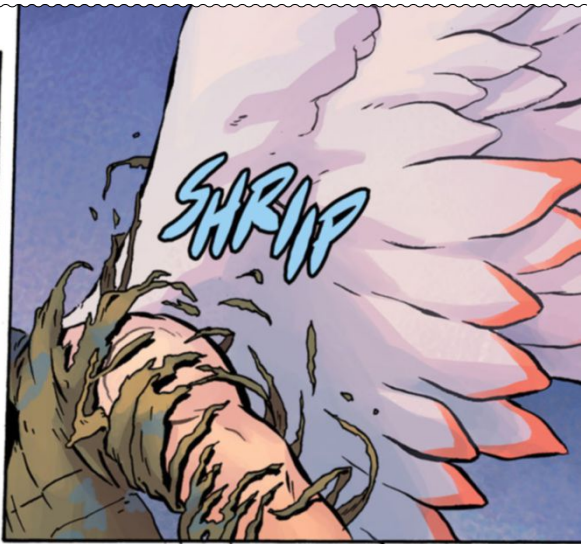
If it does happen, I'll be the first to climb into my boots with claws on the toes, or maybe sprout some wings, in aid of the cause. ✱

*Excerpted from Angel Catbird.  
Courtesy of Dark Horse Books.*









FICTION

# Three Tshakapesh Dreams

*A tall tale from the Centre-Sud*

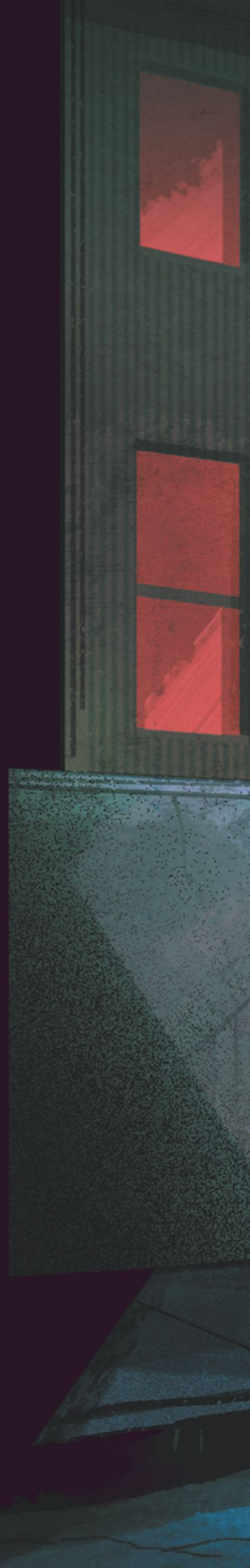
BY SAMUEL ARCHIBALD  
TRANSLATED BY DONALD WINKLER  
ILLUSTRATION BY IRMA KNIIVILA

## 1.

**Y**EAH, I remember the story, even if I don't get to tell it very often.

It happened after the war. They found the kid in the Frontenac Library toilets with a needle sticking out of his arm. It's no surprise he was shooting up. Ontario Street's known for its poets, whores, and druggies. Simon was all three. He often peddled his ass to pay for his dope, then when he got straight for a while, he gave poetry readings. Sometimes, like on that day, he went to the library and left his dogs tied to a bicycle rack at the door while he picked up books by Carole David or Patrice Desbiens. No one knew how long he'd been dead. No one knew what to do with his dogs. The medics brought out the body, with the help of the Montreal police. They kept the dogs at the pound for a while, in separate cages. There wasn't much chance of their being adopted. They were two pit bulls full of fleas and with shitty pedigrees. After a week, the vet came to give them the needle, too.

That's how families bite the dust in the Centre-Sud.







**IN THOSE DAYS**, no one knew the Indian was a cop.

It was Brisebois, his contact at the provincial police, who called him at home to tell him Simon was dead. The Indian asked if they were going to do an autopsy. Brisebois said everyone could see it was an overdose, but the Indian just laughed. He put it this way to Brisebois, then later to me:

“Simon may have had his faults, but he knew how to shoot up.”

When you say “the war” around here, you don’t mean Iraq or *Star Wars*. You mean the Great Biker War. You had to be in Montreal at the end of the 1990s to understand. Maurice “Mom” Boucher taking himself for Joseph Stalin. The Independents against the Hells. About 160 dead, nearly 200 attempted murders, bombs exploding all over the place. People stopped going out. It wasn’t Montreal any more; it was Belfast. When the government and the police got fed up, they threw everyone inside. The Indian was too young to play a role in the 2001 deployment. He was still in Nicolet. His superiors posted him here afterwards, undercover, so he could keep an eye on things. He did little jobs around the neighbourhood, peddling stolen goods, driving taxis for escorts, that sort of thing. He lived just below us, in Dan Quesnel’s triplex on Larivière Street. It was just by Saint-Eusèbe Church and the McDonald’s cigarette factory, where in spring and summer the dried tobacco smells so much like cinnamon buns that it’s been twenty years since I’ve eaten one of those damned buns.

**THE INDIAN** made Brisebois promise to at least check out the stash they’d found in Simon’s pockets.

Brisebois called him back the next day to tell him they’d found coke and a bag of almost pure heroin. The Indian went to the AA meeting on Wednesday. People were used to seeing him there. Being an alcoholic was part of his cover. He picked up a doughnut and listened to people spilling their guts until the cigarette break. Then he went to ask Keven Savoie if he knew where to find Kim. The guy told him that Kim almost never came around anymore, but that he could find her right nearby, Mondays and Thursdays, at Walter Stewart Park. She played in a lesbian softball league.

He caught up with Kim the next night, after the game. She played shortstop. Really good hands. Kim was Simon’s oldest

friend on earth, but since she’d stopped using, she’d seen him a lot less frequently. Since she’d gotten herself together, Kim had been working for the hookers’ organization, Stella. She handed out condoms and guidance to the girls in that part of town.

Kim and the Indian sobbed in each other’s arms for ten minutes. Kim couldn’t tell him a lot, but she thought the same way he did: there was something fishy about Simon dying from heroin. Smack, for him, was a rich kid’s drug, and he mainly shot coke. Besides, where would he have gotten pure heroin, with half the country’s criminals behind bars?

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**IN THOSE DAYS**, the Indian called himself Dave Tshakapesh.

He’d taken the name in memory of his grandfather. His grandfather had been a bush pilot for Hydro Québec and for outfitters in the North. He’d married a Robertson from Pointe-Bleue and spent most of his life with the Innu, the Attikamek, and the Cree. He knew lots of stories, which he’d told Dave years ago, when he was just a kid. Stories about Carcajou, the Wendigo, and especially Tshakapesh, the boy who succeeds in everything he undertakes.

Tshakapesh was born prematurely, when the Black Bear devoured his father and his mother. It was his sister who found him, rolled into a ball in the uterus that had been ripped from his mother’s body. Tshakapesh’s sister brought the little creature back to camp, where he wormed his way out of the womb all by himself. Then he stood up and asked his sister to go and get his bow and arrows so he could avenge his parents. Dave loved that idea: a baby born all set for war.

When Simon died, Dave knew something terrible was going to happen. He’d dreamt that a giant bear come from who knows where was marching on the Centre-Sud, getting his bearings thanks to the big L-shaped tower of the Quebec police, the building all the kids on Ontario Street see when they look to the sky and that everyone still calls by its old name: the Parthenais Prison.

## 2.

**THE NEXT DAY**, at the end of the afternoon, Dave went to see Big Derek.

You don’t see him around here much anymore, Big Derek, but back then he was a kind of celebrity. He trained for strongman competitions, and he had his picture in the paper along with Hugo Girard. In the crime world, he was known as the doorman at Sex Mania, the strip club at the corner of Ontario and Bercy. He was a pimp. He dealt dope to the strippers and collected debts for the Ontario Street loan sharks. People got really good at digging out money when Derek came to the door. He must have weighed 300 pounds, he had tattoos up and down his arms, and he could pull a fire truck with his jaws. That fucker had muscles in places good Christians don’t even have skin.

He lived in an old house that had been spared demolition when its working-class neighbourhood was torn down. He’d bought it from a retired schoolteacher and had right away taken down her crucifix and sacred hearts and replaced them with laminated *Scarface* and porn-star posters. Mixing a couple of Jack and Cokes, he asked:

“Did you go to the funeral?”

Dave said no. Derek hadn’t gone either. At that point, the Indian had no intention of telling Derek he didn’t think Simon had done himself in. All he wanted to do was scout the territory and let Derek get smashed so he would relax and tell too many stories. What with his cocktail recipe, that wouldn’t take long. Derek made his Jack and Cokes Centre-Sud style: four ounces of Jack Daniel’s, slightly less Pepsi, and two lines of coke on the side. His cocaine left a strong taste of burnt rubber at the bottom of your throat. And it loosened the tongue.

Derek talked to him for hours about the balance of power in Centre-Sud. On his nights off, he watched porn with the sound off while sweeping the police frequencies



with his scanner. He was the archivist for a kingdom of bums that went from Davidson to St. Denis Street, between Sherbrooke Street and the river.

Before the Indian left, Derek said:

"I always knew he'd come to a bad end. I hate the fucking bikers, but they're right about one thing: you should never do the dope you're selling."

Derek sniffed a line here and there, but you'd never find him in the toilets with a needle sticking out of his arm. Still, he had no business preaching to anybody. His vice was pussy. Everyone knew it. He screwed the girls at Sex Mania, he screwed the escorts he was chauffeuring, he even screwed the twenty-dollar whores strung out on crack that no sane guy would touch with rubber gloves. He was always up for a new hustle or some crazy deal, because he spent more on hookers than the hookers brought in.

**YES, DEREK** and the kid knew each other.

The summer before, some gangbangers from Saint-Michel who robbed freight trains had turned up at the Indian's, their tails between their legs, with a box of samples. Fencing stolen goods, that was Dave's number-one cover. These guys had emptied all the crates from a railcar stalled under the Rachel Street overpass. Not knowing what they were getting, they'd stolen twenty-five big cases of luxury dildos—silicone numbers that looked like old iMacs. Orange, pink, red, mauve. Anal plugs, high-class battery-powered vibrators, clit-ticklers—the works. Dave had a network for selling off cigarettes and booze. Clothes, too. He sold douchebag suits to the wannabe mobsters from Saint Léonard, and ghetto getups to the wiggers in Hochelaga. But for dildos, Dave needed a whole other network. Simon and Derek were his best salesmen, each in his own department. Derek sold the toys to strippers, and Simon dealt here, there, and everywhere in the gay village. After that, Dave, Derek, and Simon kept on working together and went for a beer from time to time to honour the summer they'd rained down dildos on the town.

**SO DAVE GOT HOME** that night, thinking about all he'd learned.

Not much. Except for one thing: according to Derek, Edmond-Louis Gingras was the interim drug boss in Hochelaga and the

Centre-Sud. Gingras was an old hand who worked mainly with whores, for the Italians. He'd married into the Mafia. One of Rizzuto's nieces. Like always with the Italians during a crisis, they'd chosen a perfect puppet to hold the fort while waiting for negotiations in prison to cough up the real boss. According to Derek, power was going to Gingras's head.


"You'd think he wanted to keep the job forever. Seems he's even been doing a housecleaning in the neighbourhood, of people who've been talking to the police. There's a girl and a guy who've disappeared. When I heard about Simon, I even thought he might be a rat. But then I thought, no. Simon would never have snitched to the cops."

**THAT NIGHT**, Dave went to bed with a heavy heart.

Simon would never have talked to the police—Derek neither—but they talked to him every day without knowing who he was. The Indian followed his own strict rule: never ask someone for anything if you can make him do it without knowing it. He got information out of people by making them think he was their friend. He always told himself he was protecting them, but now he wasn't so sure.

During the night, he had another dream.

He dreamt he was Tshakapesh fighting the Black Bear. He had only his fists and no knives against a fearsome animal that was twice as tall as he was. It had a shark's mouth, and its thick oily fur smelled of



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piss. He woke up in a sweat, reaching for his Glock. He remembered that his gun was at the station. He came knocking at the window of my room, upstairs. He did that sometimes. He asked me if I knew anything about Edmond-Louis Gingras. I said yes, but I added that no one around here called him by that name. What with his big fat ass and his big teats and the hair sticking out of his shirt collar, everyone called him Teddy Bear.

That was when Dave Tshakapesh realized that he, too, had someone to avenge.

### 3.

**AFTER THAT**, Dave got on Gingras's case.

The job was almost too easy. Teddy Bear needed people. The provincial police had dismantled the Rock Machine in the fall of 2000, and in the spring of 2001, they'd moved on to the Hells. On March 26 alone, they'd arrested twelve people, and not just guys who emptied ashtrays. Honchos, hang-arounds, crooked lawyers. A hell of a catch.

It's not often you can say this, but at the beginning of the 2000s, there was a shortage of criminals in Montreal. The Indian was a bright guy, everyone knew that, so he

got work pretty quickly. He didn't have much trouble convincing his bosses to keep the pressure on. With the war freshly won, the cops knew perfectly well that crime is like nature: it abhors a vacuum. They didn't want a new despot rearing his head to reign over the empire's ruins. It took Dave one week to sell the idea of laying hands on Teddy Bear. Then he spent the summer cadging more and more jobs from Teddy Bear's men, while supplying Brisebois with information at the same time. The police moved in after him and took photos of stashes of dope and Teddy Bear's cash and bungalows on the North Shore where his guys had hydroponic grow ops.

**ONE NIGHT**, Teddy Bear asked to see the Indian alone.

Dave didn't tip off his boss at the provincial police. He was afraid they'd want him to wear a wire. He went to have a beer with Teddy Bear in an Ontario Street bar. They took a booth at the back, and Dave figured out that the bar was probably owned by Teddy Bear when he saw him get up and draw two drafts without asking for anyone's okay. He made his little bank-manager speech to Dave. He very

much appreciated his work. He wondered if Dave was ready to get more involved. Dave asked him what he was thinking of, and Teddy Bear told him he was having a problem with someone. His "friend," Big Derek. Big Derek had been playing the pimp behind his back for years. Now he was dealing, too. Dave asked Teddy Bear if he was looking for a temporary or a final solution. Teddy Bear said final. That would set a good example, and they'd be able to place bets on how many shitheads it would take to shoulder that son of a bitch's coffin.

Dave pushed his luck a bit. He looked Teddy Bear straight in the eye and asked whether the kid's OD in the spring had been meant as a warning for Derek. Teddy Bear hesitated for five seconds before answering: "Yes, but he's a slow learner."

**WHEN HIS BOSSES** found out the Indian had been asked to kill someone, they were royally pissed off because he hadn't recorded the conversation.

Then they got used to the idea, and they had a secret meeting at the other end of the city with their whole on-site team, Dave, and the crown prosecutors. An undercover agent being asked to commit

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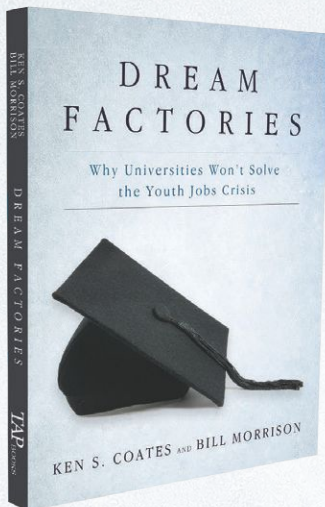
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homicide—that was the breaking point. They looked at what they had, and the prosecutors said:

“Go. We can nab them with what we’ve got.”

Dave went home and watched baseball on TV, alone in his living room, while drinking a beer in Simon’s honour. He went to bed late: he was keyed up, but his mind was at rest.

At two in the morning, he woke in a sweat.

He’d had exactly the same dream as when he’d spoken to Derek in June. He was fighting a black bear with his naked hands. Dave didn’t much like talking about his dreams. They were something very private for him. But he explained to me later that dreams don’t tell the future or the past. They tell you how to behave and whether you’ve behaved the way you should. For him, it was clear as spring water: he’d acted in accordance with his second dream, so he shouldn’t have had to dream it all over again.

Unless the ancestors were trying to tell him that he’d made a mistake.

#### 4.

**SOMETHING ABOUT** Simon’s whole story didn’t hold water.

Dave got up and went to eat two eggs with bacon at Bercy’s in the Frontenac Mall. He gave Kim a phone call to ask her if there was anything new. She’d heard nothing, but earlier in the week she’d talked to another girl at Stella. This friend had an escort client who did heroin on and off. She was a girl from the neighbourhood who put out for tourists in the Old Montreal hotels and during the Grand Prix. Her pimp had slapped her around because she’d started shooting up between her fingers. She couldn’t work anymore and was shit scared of getting another beating, because she owed money to the guy who sold her the heroin. Dave asked if she’d been able to get the name of the pusher. Kim answered: “Don’t tell anyone I said this, but it’s Big Derek.”

**DAVE PUT THE STORY** together piece by piece.

A hundred times over, he saw the expression on Teddy Bear’s face when he’d asked his question. Teddy Bear hadn’t hesitated because he wasn’t sure if he wanted to come clean. He’d hesitated because he had no idea what Dave was talking about.

Teddy Bear hadn’t had Simon killed. The asshole was just showing off.

Big Derek had a source for smack, one of the independents. Who knew which one. The Chinese or the Arabs. He’d tried to bring Simon on board. But Simon had done himself in while testing the product. Instead of telling Dave the truth, Derek had sent him chasing after Teddy Bear. Derek had always hated Teddy Bear. It was chancy, but Derek was a gambler. He’d waited for the war to end before making his bundle, and he didn’t want a new boss standing in his way.

Obviously, it all made sense only if Derek knew Dave was with the police. But he was smart enough to have figured that out on his own. The only thing you couldn’t know for sure was whether Derek had killed Simon by accident, passing him stuff that was too strong, or on purpose, to stop him from bringing Dave in on their plan to peddle the heroin.

#### THE INDIAN WAS FURIOUS.

He spent the whole day brooding in his apartment, drinking O’Keefes. Around four o’clock, he called me so I’d go buy some more at the corner store and come drink with him. It must have been 100 degrees in that apartment. The Indian was downing the beer in his living room and sweating like a pig. When he wasn’t talking to me, he kept repeating the same thing over and over, real low, between his teeth: that fuck, that fat fuck, that fat fucking fuck.

I drank a couple with him. He ended up telling me the whole story and admitting, straight out, that he was police. He was drunk. I asked him, “Are you sure it’s a good idea telling me that?” but he said his time around here was coming to an end anyway. He apologized in advance for the shit I’d be in, and I said:

“Don’t worry. I’ve known worse.”

**AROUND SEVEN O’CLOCK**, he said: “I don’t see any other solution. I’m gonna have to beat the shit out of Derek.”

I asked him if he did judo or tae kwon do or something. He said no. He said it wasn’t so hard to fight a guy bigger than you. You just had to not let yourself be intimidated and to wait for him to make a mistake. The tall guys and fat guys tend to put too much trust in their strength. Another thing was not to try to hit them in the balls. The tall



guys and the fat guys are used to people pulling that on them.

I said:

"So your plan is not to let yourself be intimidated and not to kick him in the balls?"

I was skeptical. Derek was all fat and muscle, with skin as thick as walrus hide. I wasn't even sure he'd fall on his ass if you fired a twelve-gauge into his chest. I told myself that I'd spend the next few days getting all that stuff out of Dave's head, but when I asked when he intended to go and fight Derek, he eyed how much beer he had left in his bottle and said:

"I'll finish this, and we'll go."

**YOU WOULD HAVE** thought it was a big neighbourhood fair.

The Indian told whomever he met along the way that he was going to fight Big Derek. And they went to tell others, until almost a hundred people were gathered at dusk behind Sex Mania to watch the battle in the tobacco-factory parking lot. It was up to me to go in and find Derek. I just said, "Dave wants to talk to you outside." When Derek came out, he saw the crowd and Dave in the middle of the circle, making his neck pop like the bad guy in a Bruce Lee movie.

"You kidding me, Dave? Go sober up at home, fucking Indian."

But Dave said he wouldn't budge without a fight. Derek laughed and moved into the circle. Things looked really bad. Face to face, Dave and Derek didn't seem to belong to the same species. That must have struck Dave, too, because the first thing he did was to serve up a kick in the balls. Derek dodged it, fast for a guy his size, then he delivered a right with all his strength to the side of the head. Dave blinked and fell to the ground. I was sure he wouldn't get up.

"Had enough?"

"Not enough, no, you piece of shit."

He got up and charged Derek again. He did that about ten times, fighting like crazy. Derek always ended up grabbing him and throwing him to the ground with a punch or a kick. The tenth time, he socked the Indian in the stomach, picked him up in his arms, and heaved him into the Polish butcher's garbage bin. There was a long silence, and then we heard Dave scrambling around and cursing. Derek started back toward the door to the club, saying:

"Everybody go home. The fight's over."

Dave climbed out of the container, saying: "No, it's not over."

Derek didn't react and kept on walking. Dave took his key ring out of his pocket and threw him a fastball to the back of his head. That put a big cut in Derek's hairy hide. When he turned around, you could see that the Indian had really managed to make him mad. I wasn't the only one who began to wonder how we could stop the fight and whether Dave was going to be killed. Derek clobbered him one. Dave's cheek was all deformed, and he was bleeding from his right ear. I was worried about internal bleeding, too, because Derek kept on punching him in the gut and the ribs. Dave's skin had gone white, almost green.

Finally, Derek lifted him up and squeezed. A bear hug, like in wrestling. The Indian bellowed.

"Tell them what you are, Dave. Or I'll crush you."

"Go fuck yourself."

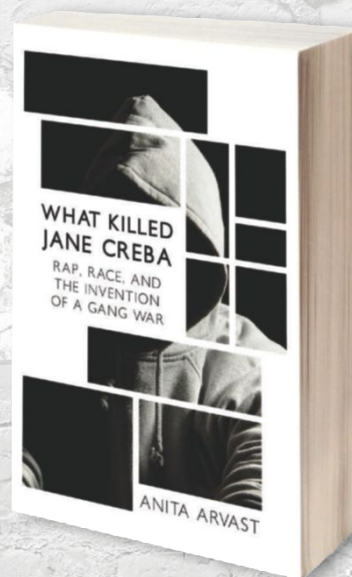
Derek squeezed some more. We heard Dave's spine cracking.

"Tell them you're a cop."

Derek kept on squeezing. We thought he was going to break the Indian in two, but with all the blood and sweat, they were greasy as a banana peel: Dave managed to slide his right arm out of the vise, and then he raised his fist high in the air and slammed his elbow like a tomahawk into Derek's eye. We learned afterwards that some bone fragments had gone right into his cornea. Derek let Dave go and fell to his knees, his hand on the eye. He was squealing like a pig. Dave went up to him, pushed Derek's hand out of the way, and threw a right to his cheekbone as hard as he could. He said later it was like hitting cement, except the cement was hurting, too. Dave struck three more blows and felt his joints give way one after the other. He gave the fifth punch everything he had left in his fist and felt an electric jolt running up past his elbow to his shoulder. His hand was broken into a thousand pieces. By that point, Derek was swaying on his knees. The Indian stepped back five or six paces, then said in front of everybody: "Yeah, I'm a cop. And that makes him a fucking snitch."

There were two angles to his strategy that Dave hadn't told me about. First, he knew that the big guys and tall guys had a tendency to drag things out. Second, he always wore shoes that looked like plain city shoes, but they had steel toes. He took a run, five steps, and hammered Derek right under

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his jaw, like he was punting. We heard the jaw split along its length like a wooden splint. For about ten seconds, Derek tried to shut his mouth, sucking at the air like a fish. Then he fell back onto his bent knees. His legs were shaking. Dave came up to hit him again, but he held back. Derek was spewing a huge pink-and-red geyser into the air. It took five of us to turn him on his side, and if we hadn't had the idea, he'd have choked to death on his broken teeth.

By the time we'd done that, the Indian had disappeared.

## 5.

**THE NEXT DAY**, people honoured an old Centre-Sud tradition.

Early in the morning, they tossed twenty

dozen eggs at the wall of Dan Quesnel's triplex. It was their way of marking the houses of those who'd talked to the police. Dave didn't even hear it. He was high as a kite from the painkillers he'd been given at the hospital. He'd been released during the night. They'd wrapped up his hand, put his face together a bit, and made him promise to come back right away if he started shitting or pissing blood.

It was the smell of rotten eggs cooking in the sun that woke him at about ten-thirty. The smell, and the pain that had returned. He went down into the street. Monsieur Quesnel and I were trying to assess the damage. Dave apologized to the owner of the house and gave me 300 bucks in twenties and fifties

to rent a pressure hose and buy him a forty-ouncer of Johnnie Walker and a bag of ice. He watched me work all afternoon, sitting in a folding chair on the sidewalk, with his Scotch on one side of him and the pail of ice on the other. He soaked his hand—all messed up with staples, scabs, and stitches—in the cold water, and from time to time he dipped his fingers in his glass to collect some ice cubes. All afternoon, we heard police sirens in the Centre-Sud. It was the guys from the provincial police and the Montreal police coming to arrest Teddy Bear and his boys. They'd had to move the operation up because of Dave's acting out, and they weren't too happy about that.

The next day, the Indian left, and we never saw him again. Never saw Derek again, either. When he got out of the hospital, he headed for the North Shore to be forgotten. We later heard that he had gotten himself arrested for forcing a thirteen-year-old girl into porn.

**ON THE DAY BEFORE** Dave left, I finished cleaning off the wall at six o'clock, and he gave me more money. He told me to go and buy hot dogs for us to eat in the stands of Walter Stewart Park. He wanted to see Kim play softball one last time. The heat had let up a little, and we felt good.

That night, I remember, I thought for the first time of asking him if it bothered him that everyone called him "the Indian." Did he find it racist or anything like that? Should we have called him something else? He said:

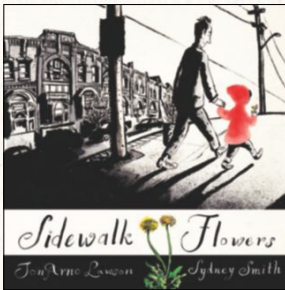
"It's hard to answer, because where I come from, the word means two different things. If you say someone dead or gone is a 'real Indian,' it means he's a brave. Someone who knows how to live and honours the ancestors. My uncle Robertson once said of my grandfather that he was 'almost an Indian.' That's the only time in my life that I've heard that said about a white man, and I can't imagine a bigger compliment. On the other hand, if you say of someone, behind his back or to his face, that he's a 'goddamn Indian,' or a 'fucking Indian,' it means he's a drunk, a fool or a hothead, a guy you can't trust and who really doesn't know how to take care of his people."

So I asked him again:

"Well, do you mind that?"

He grinned and said:

"Nah. I'm good either way." ☺



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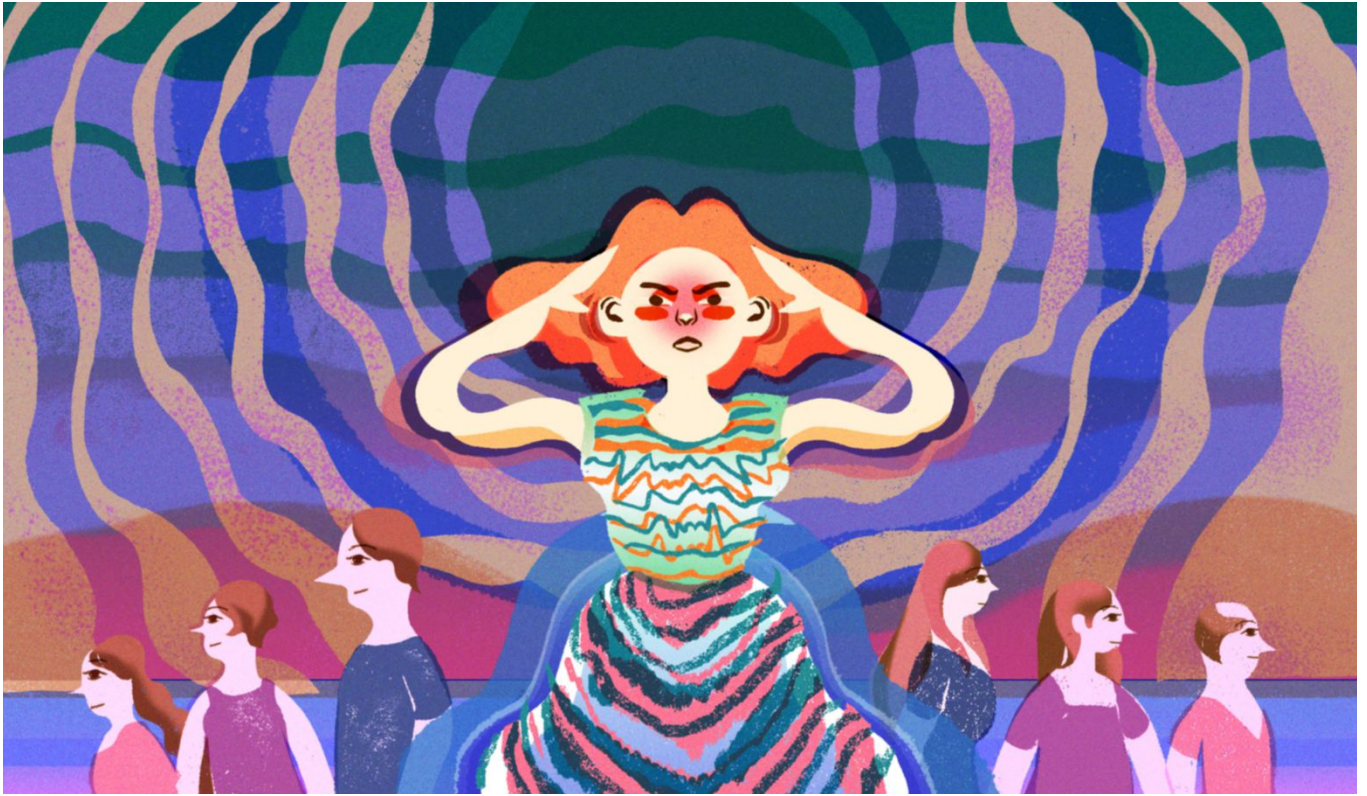
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SCIENCE

# Can You Hear It?

*For years, Windsor residents have been haunted by a hum in the air.*

*Turns out, they're not alone*

BY SIMON LEWSEN

ILLUSTRATION BY JENN LIV

**Z**UG ISLAND, home to one of the largest steel mills in the United States, is an undeniably creepy place. To get close, you must drive to the southern shore of Detroit's ravaged Delray neighbourhood. You're unlikely to encounter other humans, but you'll pass crooked houses, brick facades fronting non-existent buildings, and the remains of a Roman Catholic church, stained glass long shattered. Despite the ghostly surroundings, the island is eerily alive—a sinister mess of belching towers and twisted tracks on which railcars carry liquid pig iron from soot-black furnaces to a nearby finishing plant.

The site was once an Indigenous burial mound containing hundreds of human

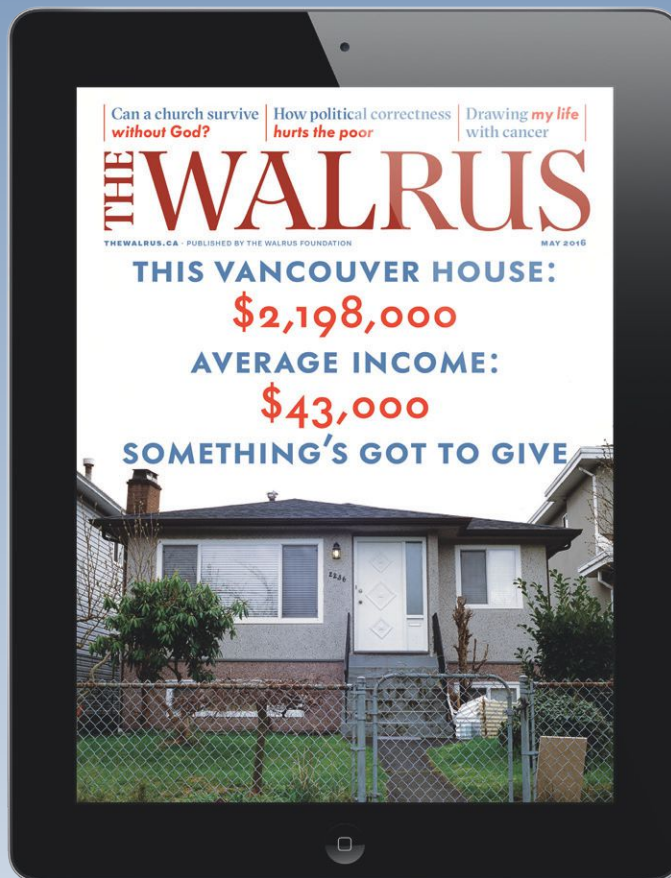
skeletons. In 1888, workers detached the island from the mainland to accommodate a shipping canal. Since the Detroit Iron Works took over in 1901, Zug has produced hundreds of millions of tons of steel, been the site of gruesome injuries and deadly explosions, and provided fodder for more than a few local legends. The SS *Edmund Fitzgerald*, a giant freighter that sank inexplicably into Lake Superior in 1975, was supposedly destined for Zug, and there are rumours of a top-secret penitentiary on the island.

Last February, I stood on the shore of the narrow turquoise canal, watching the towers churn smoke into the sky. I was there to investigate the latest Zug Island mystery: a spectral, low-frequency noise that has

been plaguing residents on the other side of the waterway—in Windsor, Ontario, and surrounding Essex County—since at least 2011. People refer to the disturbance as the Windsor-Essex County hum; it's a deep, vibratory rumble that's more physical sensation than sound. "You can't tune it out," says Mark Letteri, a philosophy professor at the University of Windsor. "You can put on headphones, but you're still going to feel it in your body."

For those who can hear it, the hum is invasive and unsettling. It rattles windows, makes sleep unattainable, and reportedly sends dogs into fits of hysteria. For years, a small group of Canadians, known as "hearers," has been trying to convince the rest of the world that it exists at all.

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FIVE YEARS AGO, Letteri first heard what he took for faraway jackhammers outside his window. “I thought, that doesn’t make sense,” he says. “Why would somebody be doing construction at 10 p.m.?” When Mike Provost, a retired insurance salesman in the Windsor neighbourhood of Old Sandwich Town, first noticed the noise, he attributed it to thunder rumbling over nearby Lake Erie. “I thought, Gee, there must be a storm over the water, but I looked up and the skies were as blue as blue can be.” In October 2015, Liz Paszkowiak-Gillan, a mother in rural Amherstburg, Ontario, listened, terrified, as what she thought was a semi truck idled outside her house around 1 a.m. “I’m in the middle of nowhere, and I’ve got hardly any neighbours around me,” she says. “I must’ve gone to the window a good three or four times that night, and I definitely didn’t sleep.” There was nothing there.

There are few places in Windsor-Essex County where you’re shielded entirely from industrial noise, whether from the Windsor salt mines, the McGregor Quarry, or the surrounding automotive factories. For most people, these are minor nuisances in a place with affordable homes and tree-lined streets. And in any case, those disturbances follow predictable business hours. The Windsor hum is different.

For the last four years, Provost, the man who first mistook the hum for thunder, has been keeping track of noise disturbances on his property. He’s a goateed, burly guy, youthful for a grandfather who walks with a cane. Last February, at his split-level house, he handed me a binder larger than *War and Peace*. It was full of entries—at least 20,000—noting the time, date, type, and intensity of every intrusive sound. From his living room, I could hear the ticking of multiple clocks, only some of which were set to the right time.

His records mention hums, as well as pulses, vibrations, and pressure releases, which he likens to “the *Enterprise* going into warp speed.” In careful handwriting, he grades each sound from one to ten, depending on its volume; he has collected more than eight terabytes of audio files from three digital recorders mounted in his backyard.


Provost is, by far, the most active poster on the Windsor-Essex County hum Facebook page, which has nearly 1,500 members. He types out and uploads his notes

to the forum daily and, until recently, sent between 150 and 200 pages of records every month to the federal environment minister, the minister of foreign affairs, the prime minister, and the two Windsor-area MPs. He has tried to get other Facebook posters to do the same—corroboration would help get the government’s attention. “We shouldn’t have to put up with this day in and day out,” he says.

The Facebook page has a small cadre of participants: mostly hearers, but also a few conspiracy theorists and trolls. One poster laments the “lack of empathy and support from local mayors” and the sense of “frustration” that comes “from not being understood.” Another suggests that the hum may have links to the Russian Woodpecker device, a Soviet radar system rumoured to have been used in mind-control experiments. Yet another tells Provost to “stop doing acid.”

WINDSOR ISN’T the first municipality to be plagued by inexplicable low-frequency rumbles. In 1973, *New Scientist* ran a story about people who were afflicted by “a low throbbing background noise that no one else [could] hear.” Such complaints were most pronounced in the British port city of Bristol, but, by the 1980s, similar noises were haunting citizens of Largs, a Scottish vacation town. The disturbance hit Middle America in the early ’90s, first reported in Hueytown, Alabama, and then Taos, New Mexico. (Agent Fox Mulder mentions the latter on an episode of *The X-Files*.) Hearer communities now make up a constellation of seemingly arbitrary dots on a map: rural Oklahoma; coastal Massachusetts; southwest Germany; the suburbs around Sydney, Australia; Calgary; and, more recently, Toronto’s Leslieville neighbourhood.

The locations seem random, but the narratives are similar. News reports describe the sound as omnidirectional and low-pitched, like a slow-moving train or, as many have put it, “an airplane stuck in the sky.” The phenomenon could be rooted in hysteria, but then why are the complaints so localized? Hum hearers, for the most part, reside in a few specific places. Explanations range from the prosaic (factories and industrial infrastructure) to the outlandish (transmissions from outer space, residual noise from the Big Bang, or bizarre atmospheric activity caused by HAARP, the




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Alaska-based project in which researchers sent high-frequency radio signals into the upper atmosphere from the mid-1990s to 2014).

In 2002, the Board of Public Works and Safety in the city of Kokomo, Indiana, commissioned a study in response to a decade of hum complaints. Researchers triangulated the noise to two sources: a cooling tower at a DaimlerChrysler factory and an air compressor at a plant owned by metal-alloy manufacturer Haynes International. That discovery offers strong evidence that these noises come from industrial sources. Those who prefer paranormal theories, however, point out that, although Chrysler and Haynes enacted measures to quell their noise emissions, the Kokomo hum hasn't entirely disappeared.

When hum complaints ramped up in 2004 in Auckland, New Zealand, Tom Moir, a signal engineer at the Auckland University of Technology, was skeptical. Still, he visited one hearer at her home, where he played her low-volume tones below sixty hertz—a frequency near the bottom end of the audibility spectrum. (The human voice, by comparison, has a fundamental frequency of about 200 hertz for women and 125 for men.)

Moir instructed the woman to turn her back to his controls. He switched the sound off and on and told her to alert him when she heard the changes. “She got it right 100 percent of the time,” he says. Moir returned to his office the next day, where he played the tone all afternoon to see whether he could develop the ability to hear it, too. He didn't, but hours later, a student walked in and inquired about “the awful noise.”

Low-frequency sound can be surprisingly robust. It permeates concrete walls and travels across extraordinary distances. Seismologists detect earthquakes thousands of kilometres away by measuring low-frequency ground vibrations, and it's said that during the Napoleonic Wars, the cannons of France were audible in England. Such noises also seem to hover in the air, unmoored from traceable sources. The brain determines noise direction by measuring the time lapse between when a sound hits one ear and when it reaches the other. But low-frequency sound waves are longer than the diameters of our skulls. They appear to reach both ears simultaneously, confounding our ability to figure out where they come from.

Just as there are super tasters, there seem to be super hearers, too. Almost all of us can hear sounds in the twenty- to fifty-hertz range if they're loud enough, but a few of us can hear them even when they're quiet, which may explain why hum hearers are outnumbered by the happily oblivious. Hearers possess the most useless superpower imaginable, since there's little but grinding and rumbling at the bottom of the sound spectrum. Moir himself is still incapable of tuning in. “I don't really want to hear the rubbish down there anyway,” he says.

data on sound direction. During one such trip, a boat carrying men with binoculars trailed him in the night.

For the first four months of the experiment, Novak found nothing. Then, around midnight one evening in early July 2013, the exhaust stacks at Zug emitted a ghostly blue flame and Novak's sensors caught a thirty-five-hertz rumble emanating from the island—one that was detectable at Windsor homes four kilometres away.

The steel-making process, he says, is “a black magic art” in which iron and lime-

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## Hearers possess the most useless superpower imaginable—there's little but grinding and rumbling at the bottom of the sound spectrum.

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**I**N 2011, the Windsor hum became a local media sensation, and, in 2012, the community established a hum hotline. More than 10,000 people called in to complain—enough to convince Ontario's environment ministry to conduct a two-month study that involved placing sound sensors in residential and industrial locations. The federal government hired Colin Novak, an acoustic engineer at the University of Windsor, to further investigate one of the noisiest spots on the ministry's map: the banks of the Detroit River, which separates Canada from the United States.

Zug Island, Michigan, is owned and operated by the United States Steel Corporation, which tightly restricts access to its 1,900 employees. (US Steel declined to comment for this story.) Adam Makarenko, a Toronto filmmaker working on a documentary about the hum, recalls approaching the island with a camera and “getting cornered right away by security guys in Broncos.” On the site, the clamour of industry is all around: jackhammer-like chugging, horn blasts, and a faint, omnipresent ring.

To sift through this cacophony, Novak installed two monitors equipped with sound-analyzing software, one on the Canadian side of the river and another that rotated between various hearers' residences. A few years ago, he also made occasional boat trips to the edge of the island, bringing with him a pentangular array—a spiky gadget outfitted with thirty microphones, which produce high-level

stone are bombarded with superheated air at temperatures as high as 1,700 degrees Celsius. A blast furnace that hot pulsates with energy. “The whole structure will come alive,” says Novak, “and the walls will move in and out like a massive speaker, emitting a giant roar.” Sound refracts as it travels. At a remove of several kilometres, that roar could be heard as an oscillating, low-frequency hum.

**C**LEARLY, there is a hum in Windsor, although by Novak's reckoning, it isn't as constant as some residents make it out to be. He suspects that in 2011 and 2012, when hum complaints were rampant, US Steel was producing something that taxed its blast furnaces beyond their normal capacity. After 2013, reports dwindled, suggesting that the company had altered whatever strange operations were behind the worst of the noise.

But after the disturbance subsided, a cadre of about fifty people continued to be haunted. They logged complaints at city hall and risked ridicule by posting regularly on the hum Facebook forum. They might have gone unnoticed, except that on April 17 of this year, Windsor-Essex County was besieged by a window-rattling, bone-shaking racket, prompting the *Windsor Star* to proclaim that the Windsor hum's noises “were some of the worst in years.” This time, Provost and his counterparts were ready to grant interviews with the *Globe and Mail* and the *Guardian*. Brian Masse, a Windsor-area MP, went to Washington



this past June to discuss regulating noise emissions from the Detroit region.

But the mystery still hasn't been solved. Novak's research suggests that the Windsor hum is a sporadic phenomenon, most likely the product of operations at Zug Island. But if that's true, why do a handful of people hear the noise all the time? A conceivable, albeit farfetched, explanation is that some Windsor-Essex County residents are tuning into another sound entirely: the worldwide hum.

That theory, despite online forums with hundreds of believers, isn't grounded in peer-reviewed evidence. Perhaps the most credible resource is a 2004 article by David Deming, a hum hearer and University of Oklahoma geophysicist, from the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*. His work has been aided by the findings of Glen MacPherson, a high-school teacher in Sechelt, British Columbia, who operates a database marking the locations of thousands of individual hum hearers around the world—evidence, for him, that the phenomenon is global. In his article, Deming cycles through popular hum explanations, ending with the one he favours: Take Charge and Move Out (TACAMO), a US Navy program in which

roving airplanes send very-low-frequency (VLF) radio signals to submarines.

TACAMO was established in the Kennedy era to create a mobile communication system that could take over if America's facilities were destroyed in a nuclear attack. Deming argues that some hum locales coincide with likely sites of TACAMO testing. Since TACAMO airplanes are constantly on the move, the phenomenon could crop up anywhere in the world. There's lab-based evidence that some people, when exposed to VLF radio waves, experience strange acoustic sensations.

Expert consensus on the hypothesis linking VLF radio, TACAMO, and a global hum is that it's theoretically possible, but highly unlikely. A more plausible hum explanation can be found in the study of psychoacoustics, a branch of psychology that considers how states of mind affect sound perception.

Low-frequency noise is all around us—the by-product of exhaust fans, cooling towers, swimming-pool pumps, tires on asphalt, electric wires vibrating in air, and wind swishing over dips in the landscape. Imagine you are a Windsor resident born with an enhanced ability to hear such sounds. In 2011 and 2012, you

were bombarded with frightening, sleep-disrupting noises from the direction of Zug Island—noises that, for understandable reasons, you fixated on. By fixating, you trained your brain to distill such sounds from the ambient metropolis, and now you hear them all the time. Are they real, or the product of human obsession? The answer, perhaps, is both. What you hear is, in part, determined by what you listen for.

At the end of my meeting with Provost, we go out on his deck so he can smoke. He tells me that he hears the hum at that very moment, albeit softly—he grades it a two out of ten—and I confess that I hear nothing except wind and children playing in a nearby backyard. “I’d feel a lot better,” he says, “if US Steel would go, ‘Yeah, it’s us. We’re working on fixing it.’” He acknowledges, however, that, without sustained media attention and government interest, there’s only a slim chance a major US corporation will admit to a group of Canadians that it’s responsible. “I’ve been told that this has become a hobby, and I guess I’d have to agree,” he admits. “They don’t make model cars like they used to.” He looks down at the logbook in his lap. “It takes up all of my time.”»



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VISUAL ARTS

# Highbrow Hoarder

*The fine line between art collector and pack rat*

BY DOUGLAS COUPLAND

ILLUSTRATION BY TINE MODEWEG-HANSEN

ONE OF COMEDIAN George Carlin's seminal monologues was his 1986 riff on stuff. "Have you noticed that their stuff is shit and your shit is stuff?" I'm made aware of this every time family members visit my house and see the art I collect. I can imagine the conversations they have when driving away: "Do you think maybe all that art stuff he collects is a cry for help?"

I've written before about links between collecting and hoarding—recoding art-collecting and art-fair behaviour as subdued forms of hoarding. Basically: Where does collecting end and hoarding begin? One thing psychologists seem to agree on is that hoarding is grounded in deep loss. First, there needs to be a pre-existing hoarding proclivity (not uncommon, with our hunter-gatherer heritage). If someone with such a proclivity experiences a

quick and catastrophic loss—often the death of a close relative, frequently in a car accident—hoarding generally kicks in within approximately eighteen to twenty-four months. TV reality shows on hoarding (A&E's *Hoarders*; TLC's *Hoarding: Buried Alive*) would have us believe that if hoarders are given dozens of helpers and a trained therapist, they can be cured by the end of an episode. The truth, though, is that there's really no cure for hoarding. Once it's there, it's pretty much there to stay.

On these same TV shows, a voice-over regularly tells us that hoarding behaviour is unsanitary and unsafe, and both are correct. A few years back, a family friend—a big-game taxidermist who ended up making more money renting out mounted animals to TV and film shoots than he did with his trade—was killed in an electrical fire that began in his basement.

He ran into his basement to try to put it out, got trapped, and quickly died of smoke inhalation. His retail storefront had always been immensely dense with hides and heads and antlers. Nobody was surprised to learn that his house had been just as crowded, but it was odd to think that his pack ratting might have been the result of a medical condition.

One of the borderline-ghoulish best parts of watching TV hoarding shows is seeing the expressions on the faces of hoarders once they realize that the intervention is for real. Their relatives are everywhere, poking out from behind mounds of pizza boxes and mildewed, second-hand Raggedy Ann dolls. There's a huge empty blue skiff in the driveway, waiting to feast on all of their stuff, and it's surrounded by a dozen gym-toned refuse movers. There's a blond woman who looks like J.K. Rowling asking them how they feel about an oil-stained Velveeta box whose contents they ate on the morning the Challenger exploded.

Until then, it's usually quite friendly, and in some cases hours can pass, and some deaccessioning progress is made, but then comes something—usually something utterly useless (a Jif peanut-butter jar, circa 1988, empty but not cleaned or rinsed)—and the hoarder chokes. From there, it's only a matter of how much of a meltdown it's going to be, and how ornery the hoarder needs to get before ejecting everyone from their house.

Needless to say, one feels a tingle of superiority knowing that one would never ever have one's inner life come to a grinding halt over throwing out a twenty-eight-year-old unrinsed jar of peanut butter. But if not the Jif jar, what would it take to make you choke? Losing the nineteenth-century rocking chair? That small David Salle canvas? And wait—how did a Jif jar ever become shorthand for life and its losses? Is that what Andy Warhol's Brillo boxes were all about? How does a postwar and contemporary art sale at Christie's become a magic-wand spectacle where, instead of peanut-butter jars, bits of wood and paint are converted from shit into stuff? How do objects triumph and become surrogates for life?

I THINK IT WAS Bruno Bischofberger who said that the problem with the way Andy Warhol collected art was that he always went for lots of medium-good stuff instead



of getting one or two truly good works. Warhol (the hoarder's hoarder) would probably have agreed, but I doubt this insight would have affected his accumulative strategies.

A publisher I worked with in the 1990s had a living-room wall twelve-deep with Gerhard Richter canvases. God knows how many he has now, but however many it is, it will never be enough.

A few years back, I visited a friend of a friend in Portland who had a pretty amazing collection of post-1960 American work. He went to the kitchen, and when he came back he saw me staring into the centre of a really good crushed John Chamberlain.

"What are you staring at?"

"The dust."

"What do you mean?"

"Inside this piece. There's no dust on the outside bits, but it's really thick in the middle."

He looked. "I think that's as far in as the housekeeper's arms can reach."

"Your housekeeper Windexes your art?"

I saw his face collapse. Later I believe the piece was professionally cleaned with carbon tetrachloride dry-cleaning solution at immense cost. It reminded me of reading about Leo Castelli, who wasn't allowed to have regular housekeeping staff in his apartment. In order to keep his insurance, he had to have MFA students work as his housekeepers. I wonder if they're now making MFA Roombas.

**I** THINK IT'S PERHAPS also important to note that most curators almost never collect anything, and if you ever ask a minimalist curator what they collect, they often make that pained face that is actually quite similar to the Jif jar lover's at the moment of possible surrender. "But you don't understand; I have no choice in this matter. You merely see an empty apartment, but for me this apartment is full of nothingness. That's correct: I hoard space." A friend of mine is a manufacturer and seller of modernist furniture. Five years ago, he built a new showroom, and he was so in love with how empty it was, he kept it unused for a year as a private meditation space.

Most writers I've met, when they're in the first half of their novel, stop reading other writers' books because it's so easy for someone else's style to osmotically leak into your own, especially during a novel's embryonic phase. I wonder if that's why curators are

generally minimalists—there's nothing to leak into their brains and sway their point of view, which is perhaps how they maintain a supernatural power to be part of the process that turns air into millions of dollars.

On the other hand, most art dealers are deeply into all forms of collecting, as if our world is just a perpetual Wild West of shopping. I once visited a collector specializing in nineteenth-century works from the west coast of North America who had an almost parodically dull house at what he called "street level" in a suburb. But beneath his boring tract home were, at the very least, thousands of works arranged as though in a natural history museum.

Designer Jonathan Adler says your house should be an antidepressant. I agree. And so does the art world. When curators come home and find nothingness, they get a minimalist high. When dealers come home and find five Ellsworth Kellys leaning against a wall, they're also high in much the same way. Wikipedia tells us, "Hoarding behaviour is often severe because hoarders do not recognize it as a problem. It is much harder for behavioral therapy to successfully treat compulsive hoarders with poor insight about the disorder." Art collectors, on the other hand, are seen as admirable and sexy. Little chance they're going to see themselves as being in need of an intervention. Perhaps the art-collecting equivalent of voluntarily getting rid of the Jif jar is flipping a few works.

**S**OME PEOPLE collect art that's purely political, or purely conflict-based, or highly pedigreed by theory, but I wonder if they're just trying to sidestep out of the spotlight of the art economy's vulgarity. But wait—did they magically win their collection in a card game? Did their collection arrive at their doorstep, a gift from Santa Claus? No, it had to be purchased with money, and it's at this level that the dance between academia, museums, and collectors turns into a beyond-awkward junior high school prom. I tried explaining a Tom Friedman work to my brother. Its title is *A Curse*, and the work consists of a plinth over which a witch has placed a curse. I told my brother it might easily be worth a million dollars, whereupon his eyes became the collective eyes of the Paris Commune, aching to sharpen the guillotine's blades and then invade, conquer, and slay the London art fair Frieze.

**T**HE COLLECTING OF STUFF—slightly out-of-the-ordinary stuff—is different now than it was in the twentieth century. Craigslist, eBay, and Etsy have gutted thrift and antique stores across North America of all their good stuff, and in Paris, the Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen is but a shadow of its former self. Once groaning with low-hanging fruit being sold by the clueless, eBay is now a suburban shopping centre with the occasional semi-okay vintage thingy still floating around.

This same sense of sparseness is felt in the museum world, where budget slashing remains the norm. As well, the fact of too much globalized money and not enough places to stash it has made pretty much anything genuinely good far too pricey for the 99 percent. The good stuff is always gone, and all the stuff that's left is shit. You don't stand a chance against moneyed, technologically advanced collectors who have some magic software that allows them to buy that Jean Prouvé stool three-millionths of a second ahead of you. Thank you, Internet.

**I** SOMETIMES WONDER if there's a way to collect stuff without tapping into collecting's dark, hoardy side. I got to thinking that if visual art is largely about space, then writing is largely about time—so then maybe people collect books differently than they do art.

Do they?

No, they don't. Book hoarding tends to be just as intense as art hoarding, if not more. It's called bibliomania and, like generic hoarding, is also a recognized psychological issue. Enter Wikipedia once again (and thank you, Jimmy Wales): "Bibliomania can be a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder which involves the collecting or even hoarding of books to the point where social relations or health are damaged...Other abnormal behaviours involving books include book-eating (bibliophagy) [and] compulsive book-stealing (bibliokleptomania)."

Bibliomania, though, is almost universally viewed as quirky and cute, the way *kunstmania* (my coinage) is seen as glamorous and cool in a Bond-villain kind of way. Oh, those booksellers sure are nutty! And they are nutty—pretty much all bookstore owners recognize that the profession brings with it a unique form of squirrelliness. The best booksellers, the

## Colour

BY MARK TRUSCOTT

The time it takes the  
i to enter is is the  
time it takes two ideas  
to relate is the time  
it takes the sun to rise  
to where it is this  
instant. I write  
*last night I watched dark clouds  
stream cirrous across the moon.*  
And now the blue of the sky  
feels like dime candy on my tongue.

antiquarian sellers especially, are those who genuinely don't actually want to sell you the book. You have to audition for its ownership, and should they sell it to you, you can see the pain on their face as

the cash machine bleeps. I once worked weekends in a bookstore. There was this guy who'd been coming in for years, and all the other sellers made cooing noises whenever he showed up for three hours

every Sunday for some passionate browsing. "Now there's someone who really loves books—a real book lover." And then one Sunday afternoon, a *New York Times* atlas fell out of his raincoat as he was exiting the store. Police later found thousands of stolen books in the bibliokleptomaniac's apartment.

As for bibliophagy, I chuckled when I learned of the term while writing this and then was chilled when I realized I'm a bibliophagist myself.

**T**HERE IS ONE THING that stops hoarding other than death—and that's the actual approach of one's own death and the thanatophobia that often accompanies it. One is forced to contemplate what will be written on one's gravestone.

BORN  
ACCUMULATED A BUNCH OF COOL STUFF  
DIED

The above epitaph isn't creepy—it's just boring. So how, then, do you manipulate your loot meaningfully while the clock ticks and ticks and ticks? For artists, dealing with stuff at the end of life becomes complicated. I find it interesting that, say, Constantin Brâncuși didn't want to sell his work in his final years. He could afford not to, and he wanted to be surrounded by his own stuff. He wanted to live inside it. It's no coincidence that when he died in 1957, he wanted his studio to be frozen in time at that moment. With its hundreds of paint tubes, Reece Mews, the studio of Francis Bacon, was one of the world's most



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glamorous heavy-metals waste dumps. And one can't help but always wonder about Andy Warhol, whose townhouse was stuffed with unopened bags of candy, cookie jars, jewels, and Duane Reade concealer. Did he ever open the doors of his rooms once they were full? Did he stop and stare at the doors, shiver, and then walk away?

In December of 2011, I saw a magnificent show at Stockholm's Moderna Museet—*Turner, Monet, Twombly: Later Paintings*. It featured works by J. M. W. Turner, Claude Monet, and Cy Twombly. As the museum's website explains, the show focused on their later work, "examining not only the art historical links and affinities between them, but also the common characteristics of and motivations underlying their late style."

The paintings in the show were remarkable in and of themselves, yet what they collectively foregrounded was a sense of whiteness, a sense of glowing—an undeniable sense of the light that comes at the end of the tunnel. Overt content became less important, and the act of cognitive disassociation from the everyday world was palpable.

The works depicted, in their way, anti-hoarding—a surrendering of life's material trappings. It was a liberating show that gave viewers peace. It let you know that maybe you should let go of many things in your life before that life is nearly over, that maybe your stuff isn't as all-important as it was cracked up to be. (Guaranteed, if you ask anyone over fifty which would they rather have, more time or more money, they'll almost always say more time.)

An obvious question here at the end is, wait—have art super-collectors, as well as bibliomaniacs, also experienced losses of a scope so great that they defy processing? Are these collectors merely sublimating grief via over-collecting? Reasonable enough, but why just limit it to collecting art or books? People collect anything and everything.

Back in our cave-dwelling days, if someone close to you died or got killed, chances are your life was going to be much more difficult for the foreseeable future, so you'd better start gathering as many roots and berries as you could. Collecting as a response to sudden loss makes total sense. But also back then, if you lived to thirty-five,

you were the grand old man or dame of the cave, with very little time left on the clock. Divvying up your arrowheads and pelts made a lot of sense—best do it before your cave-mate descendants abandoned you on an ice floe.

Collecting and hoarding appear to be about the loss of others, while philanthropy and deaccessioning are more about the impending loss of self. (Whoever dies with the most toys actually loses.)

Maybe collecting isn't a sickness, and maybe hoarding is actually a valid impulse that, if viewed differently, might be fixable through redirection tactics. Humanity must be doing something right, because we're still here—which means there's obviously a sensible way to collect berries and roots. There's probably also a sensible way to collect art and books (and owl figurines and unicycles and dildos and Beanie Babies and...). The people who freak me out the most are the people who don't collect anything at all. Huh? I don't mean minimalists. I mean people who simply don't collect anything. You go to their houses or apartments, and they have furniture and so forth, but there's nothing visible in aggregate: no bookshelves, no wall of framed family photos—there's just one of everything. It's shocking.

"You mean you don't collect anything?"

"No."

"There must be something. Sugar packets? Hotel soaps? Fridge magnets? Pipe cleaners?"

"No."

"Internet porn? Kitten videos?"

"No."

"What the hell is wrong with you!"

"What do you mean?"

"If this was twenty thousand years ago and we all lived in a cave, you'd be an absolutely terrible cave mate. You'd be useless at foraging for roots and berries, and if you went hunting, you'd only have one arrowhead, so if you lost it, you'd starve."

"Where is this coming from, Doug?"

"Forget it. Let's go gallery hopping right now." 🐘

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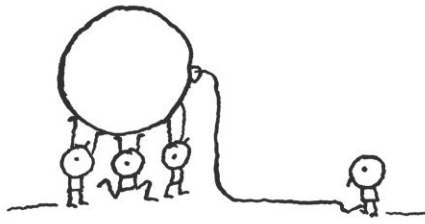
THE WALRUS



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EDITOR'S NOTE

# The Better Angels

*What government wouldn't pay \$53,000 to prevent a sex crime?*

BY JONATHAN KAY

**T**OUGH ON CRIME" was at the centre of the Conservative platform throughout Stephen Harper's tenure as prime minister. The Tories capped incarceration credit for pre-sentence custody, limited parole eligibility, opposed the modernization of obsolete marijuana laws, and legislated mandatory minimum sentences that overrode judicial discretion. As Ontario judge Melvyn Green wrote in a scathing assessment of Harper's criminal-justice legacy, "a policy of punishment, incapacitation and stigmatization has replaced one premised on the prospect of rehabilitation, restoration and reform."

Harper's attitude toward criminals was so callous that even many Tory diehards began to push back. "The federal government has a simple approach to criminal justice: more people spending more time in jail," lamented conservative *National Post* columnist Raymond J. de Souza following the federal government's decision to shut down its prison-farm program. "When queried on the evidence for such measures or a broader philosophy of the role of incarceration in the criminal justice system," he continued, "the justice department offers little more than slogans."

Thankfully, Justin Trudeau's Liberals have pledged to follow an "evidence-based" approach to policy-making—which could lead to the reopening of two Kingston-area prison farms. Shortly after winning power in 2015, the PM instructed justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould to review the entire Harper-led criminal-justice reform agenda, with a view to "increasing the safety of our communities, getting value

for money, addressing gaps and ensuring that current provisions are aligned with the objectives of the criminal justice system."

One hopes this review will extend to the rehabilitation of high-risk sex offenders. When pedophiles and rapists are released from prison after serving a full sentence, they typically are treated as pariahs by fearful local residents (who often are riled up by local front-page tabloid headlines about threats posed by "perverts" and such). One of the few programs these men can turn to for help is Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), a Mennonite-founded network of volunteers formed in 1994.

CoSA volunteers help these men deal with landlords, stay sober, access food banks, obtain government ID, avoid triggers that may cause them to reoffend, and cope with their guilt, shame, loneliness, and anger toward others (many sex criminals were themselves abused at an early age). When necessary, CoSA's lay counselors bring in psychologists, parole officers, or social workers to assist in rehabilitation efforts. The overall goal is to ensure that these men are not abandoned to their inner demons.

Studies suggest that CoSA interventions can reduce sexual recidivism by as much as 70 percent—which explains why the Canadian CoSA model has been adopted in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and nations throughout Europe. And yet, in 2015, months before leaving office, the Tories cut most of CoSA's funding—with the result that the group was forced to scale back or close down many of its operations.

The issue of how to stop predatory sexual behaviour is never far from the front pages. Yet this discussion too rarely includes any examination of the way we treat assailants after they have been caught, convicted, imprisoned, and released. Charlie Taylor and Wray Budreo are two infamous child molesters whom CoSA volunteers assisted in the 1990s. Taylor (who was mentally disabled) died in 2005. Budreo died in 2007. Both men endured the stigma of their horrific crimes until the grave. But neither man is known to have reoffended following his release from prison.

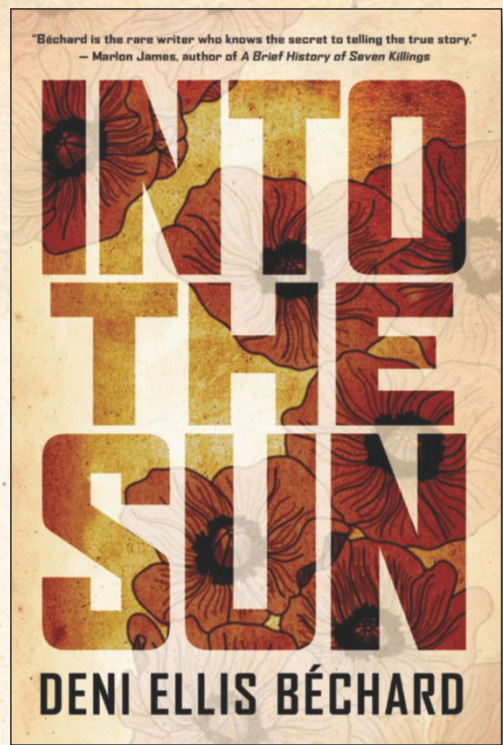
If our government is interested in "getting value for money," it's hard to beat CoSA. Because the army of CoSA volunteers that helps ex-cons is managed by only a tiny staff of paid coordinators, costs are minimal: between 2008 and 2014, total expenditures on CoSA operations coast to coast averaged only \$2.1 million a year.

Last year, scholars Jill Anne Chouinard and Christine Riddick published a comprehensive evaluation of CoSA funded by Public Safety Canada and the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. In their analysis of CoSA's value to society, they found that the cost of preventing a single "recidivistic event" (i.e., an act of abuse) within a five-year window is about \$53,000.

Given all we know about the physical and psychic harm caused by abuse, does that seem like a large sum to spend on preventing a Canadian from being victimized by a released criminal? Surely, it's one of the great bargains to be had. I'm guessing both Trudeau and Wilson-Raybould would readily agree. ♦

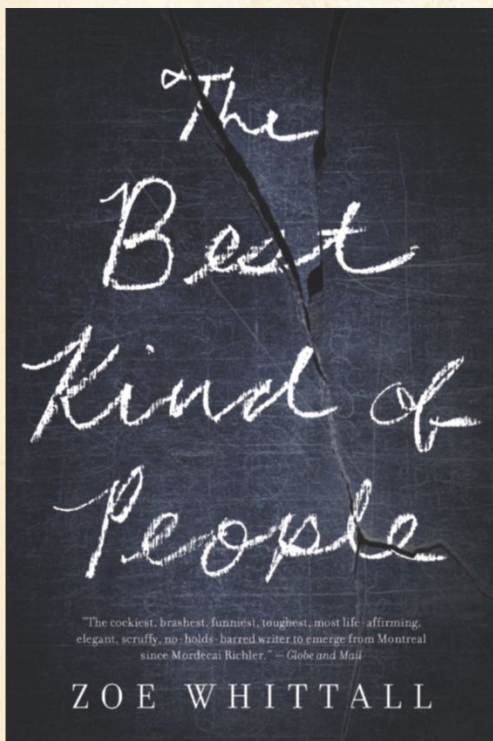


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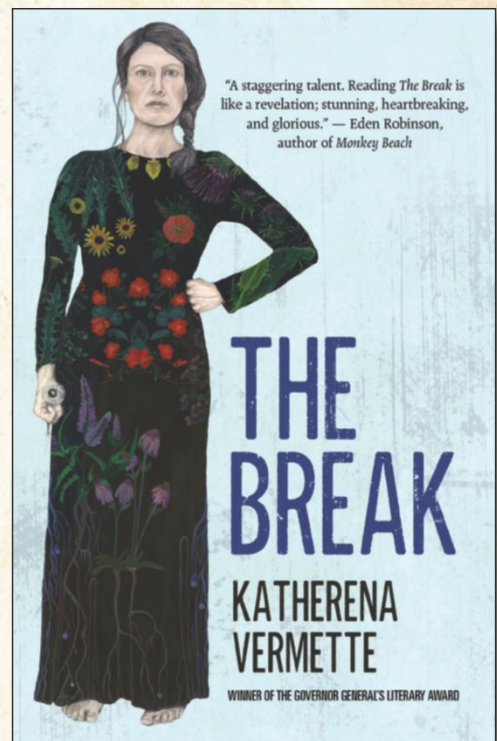
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